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THE FUTURE OF
THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

THE FUTURE OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

*Being the five Convention Lectures delivered in
Benares at the Fifty-fifth Anniversary of
the Theosophical Society, December, 1930*

BY

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THEOSOPHICAL PUBLISHING HOUSE

ADYAR, MADRAS, INDIA

1931

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CONTENTS

LECTURE	PAGE
I. By Annie Besant	1
II. By B. Sanjiva Rao	17
III. By Ernest Wood	65
IV. By Hirendra Nath Datta	103
V. By C. Jinarajadasa	165

FIRST LECTURE

THE FUTURE OF
THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

BY ANNIE BESANT, P.T.S., D.L.

FRIENDS:

We have met here this morning as members of a world-wide society, the Theosophical Society. I have often wished that we had translated that name into English, and we should then have had as our name the "Society of the Divine Wisdom". We should thus have avoided a danger. For when a Society has existed for many years, there is always a certain peril that it will become crystallized in its thought and in its methods of activity. If that danger should overbear freedom of thought and of discussion, then the Society will become a danger to the progress of the world, instead of being an inspiration. We cannot avoid facing that danger, as we go on year after year; but, to recognize it is really half the victory.

We must everywhere, in our influence upon the world and our influence over our young

members, remember that the life of the Society depends on its remaining a Society in which thought is entirely free, and frank discussion is encouraged. Anyone who has—as he or she may believe—an idea, a truth, to give to the world, should be encouraged in its delivery, so that every member may exercise his own free judgment as to the truth or error which that idea conveys. The intellect of man is, or should be, the great motive power in the world of thought; and that intellect, if it is to act usefully upon the world, must make the common good, the common welfare of the world at large, its inspiration to activity.

There is but one thing, as you know, which must be accepted by every one who comes into the Theosophical Society, and that is the existence of Universal Brotherhood as a law of Nature. But, merely to profess acceptance of Universal Brotherhood is a small part of our work. Every member of the Society should be doing his utmost to *live* Universal Brotherhood, to carry it out in his ordinary everyday life, not only to use it as a great light, a light thrown on the road of right thinking, but also to realize that Brotherhood must embody itself in brotherly activity, if it is to be worthy of its name.

Hence, it is well to be awake to the dangers which threaten every movement that goes on year after year, decade after decade. The great danger which threatens every such movement is what we

may call crystallisation ; putting it in a common phrase, the getting into a particular rut, because it is found more easy to run along a pathway which is already made, than to strike out pathways which are new. But, the vitality of any Society, as regards intellect, must depend on the intellect being open to the entry of new thought, new ideas, judging each entirely by its value, as it does or does not subserve the welfare of all, ultimately of the world at large. We must then be on our guard against becoming crystallized. That is the first danger. We must encourage the expression of new thought, the open expression of any new idea. Every intellectual advance is initiated by an individual, by some one person who has caught a glimpse of a truth, from an angle differing from that of others who are around him.

We must make it easy for new thought to express itself in the Theosophical Society ; we must encourage it actively. For instance, we should welcome it in our Lodges. In a Lodge, any subject of interest which may be brought up should be thoroughly discussed from every angle of thought of which the members are capable. To think freely is a very difficult thing, especially as the Society gets older and older. It is easier to go along a trodden path than to cut out a new way through the boundless forest of truth. We must make it easy for our members to express a new thought. The mind has—as you must know

from your own thinking—a very strong tendency to repeat itself, to make a difference which, when you come to analyze it, is only a difference of words, not a difference of thought. I consider that the life of the T. S depends very very largely on the encouragement that we give to thought which is new, however repugnant it may happen to be to some idea that we already hold, that we may cherish as being very noble. It is true what Milton once said : " Let Truth and Falsehood grapple. Who ever knew truth put to the worse in a free and open encounter ? " You must lay stress on the words " free and open ". You must not have a man shouted down by a number of opponents, who are too prejudiced to listen to some new thought that he may wish to express. Encourage him even if he be only groping. Neither must you be too ready to accept a new thought until you have carefully examined it, analyzed it as far as your intellectual power goes, tested it, seen that it is what has been called " right thinking ". For, there are so many things that lead us astray from right thinking, such as old prejudices we may have ; so many of our prejudices are inherited, or spring from the conventions that surround us, which become, so many of them, dangers rather than helps to the usefulness of our Society.

And regarding this, there is one answer that I read many many years ago by a great man who put it in the form of a question that was asked him by God. If God, he said, were to ask him : " Which

will you have, absolute truth or the search for truth?" his answer would be: "I choose the Search for Truth, for, Absolute Truth is for Thee alone." That is the answer of a man who seems to me to be as wise as he was humble. Absolute truth is illimitable, has no boundaries, no kind of barrier which should not be faced and over-climbed.

Where you doubt, suspend your judgment; do not reject the idea. Keep an open mind continually, a mind that tries to see whether any belief needs fresh revision, so as to adapt itself to new circumstances. See whether your beliefs are becoming habitual, lifeless, instead of throbbing with new intellectual life.

Let us realize that as our Society grows older and older, we have to be on our guard against a special danger—the repetition of a phrase which is not really a living expression of our own thought, and thus let ideas grow into dogmas. Now, a dogma means an opinion which rests on authority. Examine it. Do not accept it blindly, without a very careful examination of the credentials, intellectual, emotional, spiritual, which are shown by the person who propounds it.

One great duty we old people have to the youth of a country is to remember that the forward advance of a country depends on the thinking of its youth. Expressions of new thought by the young should not be hindered in any way by the older people. Elders may ask questions to help the young thinker,

leading him to test the value of his thought, but it should not be repressed by authority. Let it be considered, even encouraged to go out into the world to make its own way, or to fail to make it, according to its real value. What we call a mistake is, as Ford pointed out, a lack of experience merely, and the lack is supplied by the so-called mistake. Youth is necessary for the continuing life and growth of the Theosophical Movement.

Then, there is another danger which may be regarded as more contentious than the one noted, and that is fear. We need fearlessness. It is true that danger sometimes exercises a sort of fascination for some people, and this dulls the purely intellectual judgment. Yet this may not be an essential part of a thought, but attractive from its outer appearance. Nor must we fear to suspend our judgment, and to say so frankly. There is no necessity that we should express an opinion on everything; but it is vitally important that we should have some great central principles that guide our life. But even these we should not fear to re-examine from time to time, in case other outside circumstances, or our own youth, rather than our own growth by evolution, should bring about the possibility of some fresh angle of vision which we feel has a right to careful examination.

There are some ideas which seem to me to be vital to the growth of the Theosophical Society. Personally, I consider that the growth of the

Theosophical Society very largely depends on the existence of a proportion of the members who believe strongly in the existence of the Masters; but these must never try to enforce that opinion on others, while, at the same time, they are always ready to give the reasons for their own strong belief. The moment any idea falls back on authority as a reason for blind acceptance, that moment you should begin to suspect that authority. Truth should be able to face every difficulty, to try to meet every question; and if one is unable to meet a question, we ought frankly to say that we are not able at present to decide in favour of a definite opinion. We ought to examine and re-examine our convictions, being always ready to listen to arguments against them, and to weigh those arguments fairly and without prejudice, as far as we can. It is quite possible that we are not yet sufficiently developed to weigh the value of a thing at first sight. We feel a certain repugnance to weighing it fairly in the balance of the intellect; but, unless we try to examine and re-examine our convictions, we shall check our intellectual growth.

There is one phrase which I very often quote from the Hebrew Scriptures, because to me it has an enormous importance, whether you put it in an allegorical form, such as is sometimes used for its expression, or whether you put it in ordinary plain and simple language. Take, for instance, the striking illustration in allegorical form of the thinker

occupied in the search for God: "If I ascend up to heaven, Thou art there"—that seems natural enough; but "If I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou art there also". That is put in what I may call an allegorical form; but, it contains a profound truth. The only thing that enables a falsehood to live is the fragment of truth that the falsehood contains. A very well known Hindu Scripture says that "truth alone continues; falsehood passeth away". In matters of enormous importance to ourselves or, still more, to others, we must be scrupulously careful to exclude, as far as we possibly can, our own preconceptions, our own inherited ideas; to examine them and to see how far they are our own; or are the mere echo of the thinkings of others.

There is never any danger in examining and re-examining a truth. It comes out the more illuminating the more we test it by each new light. Hence, we should, every one of us, be careful, especially with those over whom we may have some authority, either from age or from experience, to test and retest our intellectual and emotional conclusions, to give to every idea propounded to us its fair weight. Some problems you may decide very quickly. Some, though of no use to yourself, may be useful to other people. Now and then, in the Hebrew Scriptures to which I just alluded, you have one of these deep thoughts flashing out; "The Divine Wisdom," we are told,

"mightily and sweetly ordereth *all things*." So that everything is worth examining from the very fact of its existence by virtue of a truth, however fragmentary, that it may contain. Or again: "Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?" Does not that suggest that evil is only imperfect good? That it will grow into good?

Keeping that as a rule of life, we are likely to avoid prejudices to some extent, and I am inclined to say: examine every new idea which comes to you, which appeals to you or repels you. Each is growing; do not reject it without consideration; even if you cannot see in it anything useful or good, you will fulfil your duty by leaving it on one side. We cannot, without danger of error, make our own knowledge, our own thought, the measure for the truth that another may have glimpsed. When there is an opinion that is repugnant to us, we should look into it the more carefully, and see first whether our personal repugnance is not making a barrier to a fair examination, or whether only perhaps it is repeating some old idea in a new form of words.

Freedom of thought, then, is vital for the future of the Theosophical Society. Encourage discussion; listen to it fairly and patiently; be willing to test your own opinion again. You might have grown between the time when you formed an opinion and your present stage of consciousness. It does not follow that, because it is true under one set of

circumstances, it is necessarily true under another set of circumstances. A certain congruity is necessary before we should act upon a thought.

The other main danger that we have to avoid. I think, is letting the superiority of our own belief in a particular truth that we hold, lessen the keenness of the analysis that should enter into the examination, and in this way carefully exclude it, even if cognate to the subject under discussion. There are some beliefs we have which are so useful to us, that some of us think that infallibly they must be useful to every one. We are a little inclined to force them unduly. Whether a truth is useful to a person or not is determined by his own stage of consciousness ; whether he can respond to it or not, that is the real test. If he cannot respond to it, either he has passed beyond it, or has not yet grown up to its height. Above all else, let us never discourage the free thinking of a brother. Let his thought go its own way, unless you can add to it a helpful idea. It may be that the holder is struggling after a fragment of truth enveloped in a husk of error ; that sometimes a truth, the most difficult to find, is the most valuable when found. Let us in thinking of the future of the Society, make freedom of thought within it an essential condition.

There is another point which is very much more debatable than those mentioned, and that is when we like an opinion very strongly which is congruous

to our own, but lessen its value in expression, because we have a certain prejudice lurking in the mind. It may be a national prejudice, it may be an inherited prejudice, it may be the general force of opinion all round us which dulls our perception of an error. Thus, it all comes back really to the idea: "Keep an open mind."

There is one point that arises that I think I can quite frankly mention to you, that I once heard put by a Master, when He said, that if people held what may be a true idea, but one which would not be suitable to the person to whom it was expressed, you might hinder that person instead of helping him. It arose out of a curious discussion whether it was a good thing for people to see both sides of a question. Most people would say hastily: "Certainly it is. Let us always help people to see both sides." The idea which was put forth was: "Suppose an ordinary person were to see both sides quite equally, so that each of them has a similar attraction or repulsion for him, then he probably would not act at all. That is an idea of the value of one-sidedness that you might think over." There is a deep truth in it. It is quite possible to be inactive, because you see both sides either so imperfectly, or so very perfectly, that the mind fails to perform its real function of thought, the direction of activity. It might paralyze instead of guide. It struck me so much, because, I had not thought of that particular difficulty. When

one comes to think of it, one sees that a certain amount of one-sidedness is necessary for action, except in the case of the perfect. It would be, for others, like putting equal weights into the balance of a weighing-machine.

Test your thought in every way possible ; you cannot do it perfectly, I know ; none of us can. But, use your utmost discrimination, especially if you know that the person who propounds a statement is very much more advanced in his knowledge than you are. We must, as a matter of fact, accept many things on the authority of the expert. We are unable to go into everything from the beginning by experiments made by ourselves ; in that way, there grows to be a certain body of accepted truths, but even with those, I think we should examine ourselves to see whether some imperfection in ourselves is not our difficulty in accepting a truth presented to us.

For a Society like the Theosophical, keenness of intellectual perception is of enormous importance. There are so many Theosophical teachings which fascinate us naturally and inevitably. I do not think that any of Krishnaji's many valuable teachings is more valuable than his exhortation to examine everything before you accept it. If you find you cannot understand it with your best efforts, wait until you grow a little more, and try again. Keep an open door, even though it be risky. But take care what kinds of thought they are which are

coming through the open door, and are establishing themselves as pieces of permanent furniture in your mind. An idea may be true when it came in, but it may come into contact with something in you which diminishes and destroys its present value for you.

So, let us stand in the Society for complete Free Thought. I do not say there is no risk in it; there is. But the risk is a lesser risk than the acceptance of everything, unless the authority relied upon is that of One who is infallible. We may take authority as a guide to experiment; but I do not think that we do wisely to take it as an authority for action, unless we have tested our own capacity to judge it, and are not overpowered by some fascination it may have, possibly because it confirms a prejudice of our own. That is one question that you may well discuss at present, and that is the reason why I am speaking about it.

There is one other question that I would ask you to think over very carefully, and that is a question which to me is of vital importance for the future of the Society: "What is your own attitude to the Masters?" If you have really thought over that as strongly and as carefully as you are able to do, if you arrive at a decision, or if you do not, have you the courage to say frankly to yourself: "I have—or, I have not—sufficient evidence, either to convince me of the existence of the Masters, or to enable me to say that They do not exist"? It is

a far better method to cultivate the suspension of judgment than to deny too hastily. The question arises for those of us who believe in Them, or know Them. If we know Them, and if we find that knowledge beneficial to us, we should not, even then, try to impose it on anybody who does not want it. But also we should never withhold our testimony from fear of ridicule, from that kind of fear which does not appear in its own ugly guise, but only as a "wise caution". The existence of the Masters is such a vital question that it seems to me unwise to leave it untested, without examining it to the very utmost of our power, and re-examining again later on, when we may hope we have grown somewhat more. If we know it, I think then, without unduly pressing it on anyone, we should, if the question arises, very quietly say that we know of Their existence, and quite frankly and readily answer the question: "Do you know of your own judgment, of your own experience, or only on the authority of someone whom you think superior to yourself?" It is better, I think, to wait, without coming to a full decision, for the time when no lurking doubts remain in the heart. If They exist, your belief or non-belief makes no difference to Them. But it makes an enormous difference to you. They do not press Themselves on anyone. Probably you know that beautiful picture, in which the figure of the Christ is standing at a closed door and knocks. You may have

observed in the picture that there have grown across the lower part of the closed door a number of thorns and prickly growths of the jungle. It is worth while always to see whether we have a jungle in our own minds which has shut out a Great One; that we do not wish to believe, because the implications of that belief would make demands which we are not ready to answer. We should do well to examine whether it is not that kind of an inner reluctance, which arises from the possible implications, which is the unworthy cause of our inability to believe. Almost above all other questions, this question as to the existence of the Masters seems to me one for which we should ever be seeking an answer, or have come possibly to a temporary decision upon one side or the other. That it has tremendous inspiration there is no doubt; that inspiration may grow into fanaticism, seeing only one side of the case. If that is so, it is better to seek for more evidence, and not to let the mere fascination carry you away.

I do not for a moment hide from you, or wish to hide, that my devotion to my Master is the dominant motive power in my mind and heart. It is so, because from experience, which has now lasted for a little more than half my life, I have had the joy of knowing what it is to live with Them. That that will expand and increase, I have no doubt. It is the ruling motive in my life for service.

Every one had better make his choice. No one has a right to dictate to another. Only this I can say: it is my own experience that the more I have believed in Them, the more I have found that I understand, and that I serve. I propose to cling to that belief, and only to put it by if I find it hampering further service. But I close with the statement: "Do not believe, because someone else believes; out of your own knowledge you should judge." That was the advice of the Lord Buddha, the most illuminated so far of our humanity. The longer you are in the Society, you love it the more. That is my experience.

SECOND LECTURE

THE FUTURE OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

BY B. SANJIVA RAO, M.A. (CANTAB.)

(MR. C. JINARAJADASA said: Friends, This is the second of the five public lectures in connection with this Convention. The general title is "The Future of the Theosophical Society". But, the President Dr. Besant has desired that every lecturer should exercise the utmost freedom in the expression of his views on this most important matter. It is therefore necessary to realize that if the speakers should seem to contradict one another, that is a part of the programme. Our second speaker is Principal Sanjiva Rao who is very well known to you not only in Benares but also in the United Provinces. He is fairly well known to all of us in India and, therefore, I do not particularly need to introduce him to you. I am glad that he is speaking to us and I am always glad of his presence, because he continues to us to-day that very glorious tradition of the Central Hindu College.

He has carried that on to a big Government college of which he is now the Principal and as you are aware he is actively helping in the development of our own particular schools and in the new experiment which will be initiated on the banks of the Ganga beyond the bridge at Rajghat. I will ask Professor Sanjiva Rao to speak to you.)

BROTHER DELEGATES AND FRIENDS :

You have had in the past years the privilege of listening to the leaders of the Theosophical Society. Almost for the first time the opportunity has been given to one like myself who belongs to the rank and file to express my views about the future of our Movement. I am particularly relieved this morning that the President of our meeting is Mr. C. Jinarajadasa and not our great President of the Society ; for it is difficult to speak in the presence of one so great, so outstanding a leader as Dr. Besant is. I am anxious this morning to speak to you freely for if I have to speak to you at all in a useful way, it must be out of the fulness of my own heart and of my own mind.

It has been my privilege to have been connected with this Movement directly or indirectly during the last thirty years and I naturally feel a great deal of anxiety about the future of our work. I have given during the last few years a considerable amount of thought about the future of the Theosophical Society and I wish to place before you my own

conclusions about that future. I think you will agree with me that whatever anxiety we may feel about the future of the Theosophical Society, one fact stands out clearly and distinctly, and that is, that the Theosophical spirit and the ideals which are behind the Theosophical Movement, and for which it has worked in the world during the last 55 years, have spread in a most marvellous manner throughout the civilized world. The Theosophical spirit shows no sign of decadence. In India it has spread in every part of the country and has affected every institution, social, political and educational in a manner which ought to cause us the deepest satisfaction. I would ask you to consider whether there is any reason to fear that the ideals for which we stand are no more needed. Looking around you, you will find that on the political platform to-day are gathered together people drawn from every creed and every province, men and women without any distinction of caste, of race, or of language. It is surely a matter of rejoicing to us to find in India to-day the breaking down of age-long barriers that have separated Indian from Indian and man from man. In the establishment of a spirit of brotherhood which in its highest sense is the Theosophical spirit, we ought to be happy that the work which it was our privilege to do in the earlier days of the history of the Society is to-day being carried on by thousands who are not technically members of our Society.

When we turn to social reform we shall realize that our pioneer work has borne abundant fruit. For many years it was more or less the unique privilege of our Theosophical Conferences and Conventions to meet without any distinction of sex, of caste or creed. We have all known to our amazement and joy that the womanhood of India to-day has accomplished the great miracle of destroying the artificial restrictions and limitations imposed upon them through many centuries in the past. Thousands of women have come out of the seclusion of the pardah and sacrificed themselves for the Motherland. One of the most magnificent signs of the new spirit is this awakening of the womanhood of India; and we ought to feel deeply thankful that it was the privilege of the Theosophical Society to have been one of the great pioneer movements in freeing the women of India and releasing the splendid heroism and the spirit of sacrifice which have accomplished such wonderful things to-day. In the department of education it is needless to speak of the great work which the Theosophical Society has done in the past; and if to-day the ancient ideal of Hindu Education, that old world relationship between teacher and disciples is spread throughout the length and breadth of India, we must surely not forget that that work was done in the Central Hindu College by our President and her devoted colleagues. We find to our great joy that the work of the Theosophical Society has borne

abundant fruit, that the spirit of toleration, of mutual understanding, of reverence for the spiritual ideal of life, all those things that surely constitute the Theosophical spirit have permeated every department of our national activities.

I as a member of the T.S. have therefore no misgivings whatever as to the future of the T.S., for one simple reason that to me the value of the organization as such, is very much less than the future of the members of the T.S., than the future of the Theosophical spirit which has found expression in the T.S. I value very much more the spread of the Theosophical ideals, the ideals of education, the ideals of self-sacrifice, the ideals of service, than the increase in the membership in the T.S. But I must lay special stress on this point of view because this forms one of the fundamental and distinctive changes which are taking place in the life of the world to-day. The history of the T.S., which as our President told us yesterday is a world-wide Society, is exactly parallel to the history of the different world movements of to-day. Because we are a world-wide Society having its centres in something like forty-three different countries in the world, it is inevitable that the world spirit should have shown itself, should have manifested itself in a clearer and more distinct manner in the history of our Society than in that of any of the other more or less national societies; and that is the reason why we find to-day the domination in

so full a measure of that world spirit in the history of the T.S. As a result of the World War, all the old landmarks have been almost effaced. It is a new world in which we are living to-day, a world with different values of life, with different ideals, with different forces working in their midst. If you look at the map of Europe to-day and if you look at the people and the way in which they think and feel to-day, you will realize that a greater change has taken place during the last few years than probably has taken place during the many centuries that preceded it.

We have to-day the spirit of revolt manifesting itself in every department of life. It is not merely in the T.S. that we are discussing the question of authority and tradition. It is a world problem. Authority in the home, the sanctity of the marriage tie, problems associated with the relationship between man and woman, these are the vital problems which are being discussed everywhere in the world. If you go and attend any of the conferences of the Christian Church there is no more pressing problem, there is no more vital problem than this of finding a rational basis for social ethics. We shall find that the Christian Church is discussing the future of Christianity just as we are discussing the future of the Theosophical Society. The future of every human institution is being discussed and written about, the future of science, or the future of marriage, the future of domestic life. In the "To-day

and To-morrow Series" you will find literally hundreds of books on these subjects. The fact of the matter is that the world to-day is in the melting pot, and every question is being affected by the operation of world forces, so that, in the course of the next decade or so, we shall have an entirely new world, a new outlook, a new way of looking at everything, very different from that to which we have been accustomed, so that, friends, we must examine the conditions through which we are passing, how these world forces are reacting upon us as members of the T. S. just as they are reacting upon all other institutions. It is not a problem peculiar to the Theosophical Society. It is a world problem affecting almost every institution, every human organization.

To-day, we have in our midst one who represents and embodies in himself this new spirit, this spirit of revolt, in the person of Krishnaji. He speaks to us of the duty of doubting, just as Bertram Russell in the world to which he is addressing himself speaks of the duty of scepticism. You may remember our President speaking to us yesterday laid stress on the fact that no institution which has got even a portion of truth in it can ever entirely decay. We may rightly conclude from that, that whatever is subject to decay cannot be the expression of truth. So, why should we be afraid of anything connected with the T.S. being destroyed? If it can be destroyed, then surely it

cannot be the expression of truth, because the characteristic of truth is permanence. It can never die, and therefore to challenge the truth is a necessity of the intellectual life and therefore I welcome that spirit of challenge in the T.S. We have a right to demand of our leaders the justification of every teaching they have given. We have a right to question Krishnaji just as we have a right to question any other teacher. "Is what you are saying a truth which will stand any challenge, which will stand the closest scrutiny of human thought and of human experience?" You are aware that Krishnaji has definitely announced that he is no more a member of the Theosophical Society. During the last many years we have been proclaiming him as the vehicle of the World Teacher, we have given him our moral and intellectual support as members of the Society. To-day, he says: "I want to stand by myself," and I think every Teacher who has got a message to give to the world should stand by himself, should not have the support of any organization, because, before his message can be acceptable to the world, it must comply with this test that it is sufficiently adequate to enable an individual to stand alone on his own inner strength without being propped up by any organization whatever; and since we would not give him up, he has quietly left us.

In this there is nothing to regret, because he has a message to the whole world and that message says :

“ Be your own lawgiver, be your own guide, rely upon your own inner strength and do not depend upon anything external.” Now the world wishes to find out whether what he says is true, whether he depends upon anything external, whether he depends upon the support of the Theosophical Society, upon the declarations in the past made by our President, by Bishop Leadbeater, whether he depends upon the glamour which we have created round him by speaking of him as the World Teacher, by surrounding him with all our devotion. Does he depend upon it for the success of his work? Does he need our affection? These are the questions, which although we may not ask and shall not ask, but which people in the world outside are asking. They are saying to this effect: “ While Mrs. Besant announced you as the World Teacher, you had an organization of nearly a lakh of members to support your claim; you had the prestige, the tradition created for you in order to help you to announce your message. Can you do without all that? If you can be happy alone, with no followers, no institutions to support you, then there is something in your message which is worth having.” Just as a truth must be challenged, must be criticized till every element of falsehood in it has been eliminated, so one who stands before the world, as a messenger of truth, must stand this scrutiny of being isolated, being left alone to face the world of the past and to show that the truth within him, the truth which he

has embodied in his life, is adequate, is sufficient. Such truth is necessarily a danger to all that is non-essential, to all that is false; such a teacher, wherever he goes, is a source of danger to all institutions which have become crystallized, because he destroys all that is false, all that is non-essential. Friends, because the T.S. had the privilege of nurturing this great Flower of our humanity, the privilege was given to the Theosophical Society of being the first to receive the impact of this tremendous truth. The results are truly amazing. Because to come into contact with pure truth, stripped of every convention and falsehood, of every dead tradition, is the most vitalizing but also one of the most uncomfortable of experiences.

Brothers, when we are trying to understand the teachings of Mr. Krishnamurti we must remember that he is speaking to us as individual human beings. He is examining not Theosophy, not the many statements which have been made on that subject by our leaders. He himself will be the first to admit that he is not a particularly deep student of our Theosophical literature. His main concern is with us Theosophists, live human beings, and not with the many theories we profess. It is our beliefs, our dissensions and strifes, our attitude towards the Master, towards reincarnation and karma, our attitude to each other, towards other human beings, our mutual glorification or vilification, our self-importance, our sense of being the

chosen people, our clinging to small things, to institutions and organizations, it is these and not Theosophy or the Masters that he is concerned with. What has he to do with all the other things, when he sees before him a great crowd of human beings suffering on account of wrong and false attitudes towards life; we, members of the Society, in our ignorance and distress, have asked for many years for the blessing of his presence and he has come as a Physician to heal, and destroy all that is unessential. He is dealing with our ailments and not with the teachings of Theosophy. If a doctor came to our doors in response to a call from us, is it wise on our part to enter into an argument about the soundness or otherwise of the theories of health or diet that we profess but do not follow? Shall we get impatient with him, because he refuses to discuss either his credentials or our theories and reminds us ever so patiently and gently that he has been called by us for the purpose of healing us? Is it relevant to discuss whether there are doctors more qualified or less qualified than he is, about their competence or otherwise, about the truth or falsehood of what they have or have not said, when our very lives are in danger? Should he not say to us, as he is saying: "Oh! get well first and then we may have the opportunity of discussing, if we must, these irrelevant questions"?

I think that that is the very first thing we must bear in mind when we try to understand Krishnaji's

teachings, that he is dealing with us as he is dealing with the rest of the world, as live human beings with definitely human and practical problems, and our problems are essentially the same as the problems of the world. What briefly are those problems?

For nearly a century physical science has dominated the world of thought. Its concepts have dominated all our thinking, till man has become a machine. In the world of labour, it has led to enormous development in technical ability. The mechanic as he is most aptly called is a person who has acquired a very considerable power of controlling external forces. He can deal with great engines, with great explosives. The mechanic on the plane of the mind can set in motion enormous organizations with absolute indifference or callousness to, or sometimes complete ignorance of, their effects on the individual. All this is the logical outcome of the erroneous belief that science can solve all problems of life. We can hardly realize the deadly consequences of such an unreal attitude towards life. In the course of a century we have seen a complete change in the values of life. The hero of antiquity was the wise man, the hero of the middle ages was the saint, the holy man, the hero of the present day is the great leader of industry or the great engineer who can harness the energies of the world. The development of technical ability is the ideal of to-day and not the culture of being—

doing instead of being, expression instead of significance, organized service instead of kindness of feeling, efficiency in the place of wholeness of life, success and prosperity in the place of health and well-being, comfort and luxury in the place of happiness, quantity and mass being preferred to quality and distinction, speed and hurry considered as the signs of progress rather than quiet dignity and cultured calm. The individual has been caught up in this complicated mechanism of scientific progress, and the genius of science, bottled up for so many centuries, has at last been released and has made a slave of the very intellect which has released it. So while man has mastered and controlled the external powers of Nature, he has become the slave of that very organization which he has created. The cry of the world is for freedom from the tyranny of the engine, from the tyranny of organization. In the labour world the mechanic's cry is for liberation from the unceasing slavery to the machine which makes him merely a "hand," and which destroys for him the wholeness of life. In the political world it is for release from the deadliness of bureaucracy which destroys all the beauty of human relationships. In the domestic life, it is for release from mechanical and unmeaning obedience to a moral code and a tradition that has lost all reality. In the world of thought it is for freedom from the effects not only of past tradition, but the equally fatal influence of collective or

group thought, it is a struggle for release into a life of individual freedom. 2971

The first step towards the attainment of this freedom is the realization of our bondage. We are breaking down all external barriers in the way of our realization of freedom. We have nearly broken down all authority, all moral codes, all conventions. In this particular region, I believe that no greater change has ever taken place, destroying all the most sacred beliefs and institutions of the many centuries that lie behind us, than that which took place after the War of 1914. Belief in morality, in the sacredness of private property, in the sanctity of the marriage tie, in the promises of religion, all these are vanishing as fast as can be accomplished by the methods of modern propaganda. With the swift destruction of external obstacles has come the equally rapid realization that man is really not free. Only recently Einstein said: "I do not believe we can have freedom at all in the philosophical sense for we act not only under external compulsions but also by inner necessity." Schopenhauer's saying: "A man can surely do what he wills, but he cannot determine what he will will," impressed itself upon me in youth.

And yet man seeks for freedom as surely, as inevitably as the tree seeks for light. Why is it that we cannot determine what we will? Why are we under the sway of longings and desires that compel us continually to go out and gain experience. There has been probably no age which is experimenting

more boldly with experience than the modern age. America on one side, Russia on the other and other countries in their turn are all testing, rejecting, assimilating. Nothing escapes observation, the minutest and subtlest impulses of human nature existing even in the subconscious region of our consciousness are all examined with great attention and are sought to be understood. All the taboos, moral or social or religious, on experience have been withdrawn. It is as if Humanity has wiped off all that she has written, and intends writing a new chapter in human life for the world as a whole and not for a single nation.

This is the problem of the world and, friends, is it not also our problem in the Theosophical Society? We are part of that larger world outside. We did a great work before the War, but the War has been a great experience to millions of human beings and it has pushed the world far beyond where we found it, and the world demands of its leaders and teachers a solution for its problem. It asks: "We have destroyed many obstacles, many barriers in the way of free self-expression. But we have become slaves of the engine, of the office, of the crowd, of public opinion, of the newspaper, we are slaves of our prejudices, of our longings and desires. How shall we release the individual from all these tyrannies? How shall we create instead of producing?"

Two thousand years ago, the value of the individual was taught by the Christ, who sought to release

the Hebrew mind from the fetters of an old world dispensation by teaching that the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath. To-day once more a great teaching is being given to the effect that the supremest gift to Life by an individual is his individual uniqueness. Krishnaji tells us that man is not made for institutions, but that the purpose of all organization is the fulfilment, the perfection of the individual. Individual uniqueness must be distinguished from individuality, that element in man which makes for separateness. Indeed individual uniqueness does not fully manifest itself until the illusion of the separate limited self with interests of its own, apart from the whole, has been abandoned. We shall now consider the nature of this principle in life which Krishnaji calls individual uniqueness. To use the words of H. G. Wells :

“Something struggles to exist; it becomes conscious, becomes conscious of itself. Above the beast in us there is the desire to know, and beautifully to transmit that knowledge. That is all there is in life, beyond food and shelter and tidying up. This Being—opening its eyes, listening, trying to comprehend, every good thing in man is that—looking, making pictures, listening, making songs, making philosophies and sciences, trying new powers, bridge and engine, spark and gun. At the bottom of one's soul *that*. We began with bone scratching; we are still near that. Every book, every act, every

religion is that, the attempt to understand and express—mixed with other things. Nothing else matters."

The above passage with a few verbal alterations is from a modern writer and thinker and accurately describes the nature of that universal urge which is consciously or unconsciously guiding every human effort. From the philosopher and sage down to the lowliest savage there is this inner creative, driving force which is continually urging the human being to seek for ever newer forms of experience. He enjoys, suffers, goes through great agonies and ecstasies. Slowly but inevitably he gathers an ever-increasing volume of experience and evolves intelligence, that capacity to choose between what is real and essential and what is false and futile, and with that intelligence as his guide, he continues his quest for Reality. His path is strewn with the wrecks of many systems which he builds up laboriously and patiently, only to break them up and reject them, when he realizes their inadequacy to express *that* which he is in search of. Are we not all doing that—not merely man, but every living thing around us? It has been said by one who knows that Nature conceals Life. Yet could we but look into the heart of Nature, could we but penetrate into its secrets hidden from the eyes of the ignorant, we should find in that Nature around us the same process going on, on a lower level of reality. Have you ever watched the

growth of a plant or a tree in the garden, the wonder and the mystery of its long struggle? The breezes have blown a chance seed in the cleft of a rock. The seed grows into a little plant, pushing its roots through the rock deeper and deeper into the soil beneath. Watch the manner in which those roots seek for the moisture in the earth, how they penetrate and explore and feel their way underground, touching here and recoiling there; the exploring root tips, with a mysteriously subtle intelligence, avoid all places unfavourable to progression, finally moving in the direction of water containing in solution the salts that the plant needs for its maintenance; and while the roots dip downwards into the earth, the stem of the plant shoots upwards, in the direction of sunlight. Its upward course is one long struggle for the light, light which makes to that life the necessity and the principle. Should there be a barrier or an obstacle, the plant only bends round it. Every twist, every deviation from straightness is but an evidence of a struggle against adverse circumstance to reach the freedom of the clear skies. Before many a storm does it gracefully bend, continually adjusting its branches to the force of the wind, and we know that the greater the storms that it has successfully withstood the stronger the tree. Sheltering trees from the wind only weakens them.

No more beautiful symbol of the course of human life could we have than in the struggle of the tree

towards Light. Like the tree man in his search for Reality must send the exploring tips of his soul into the depths of life cleaving the hardness of the rock or, to use Ruskin's luminous phrase, "binding the transience of the sand". Into the midst of sorrow and pain, of joy and pleasure, the soul must explore in order to obtain that sustenance, that intelligence, which Krishnaji calls the accumulation of experience. The deeper he goes down, the greater the heights which he will attain. He can attain the mountain top only when the roots of his being have buried themselves into the deepest portions of life, when he can stand firm in the midst of the severest storms of life.

Who teaches the tree the law of its growth? What artist whispers to the violet the secret of its eternal beauty, what divine architect explains the principles of building to the banyan tree as it constructs its great cathedrals of branches and roots? What musician unravels the mystery of harmonious sound to the bird that sings out of the fulness of its passion? What landscape gardener helps Nature to soften the hardness of the rock by clothing it with the soft green moss; what secret artistry it is that continually creates beauty out of ugliness, the exquisite lotus out of the slime and the dirt of the stagnant pond?

That Eternal Artist is God or Life or whatever name we may use for the mystery which we find at work all around us, made manifest in the individual.

Could we but realize that behind every desire, every blind, instinctive groping after Reality there is the unceasing activity of this universal Principle there would come into our life, a calmness and serenity, an assured conviction of ultimate achievement of the goal, a joyous steadfastness in the search for Reality. Life is difficult because of this uncertainty. Most of us who are able to intelligently understand the processes of Nature do not find it difficult to believe in the existence of this Divine Creative Power in Nature. But we are uncertain when we deal with human life. "Have you seen God?" is the ever recurring question which those who are uncertain ask of the Teacher who has attained certainty. You may be aware that the late Swami Vivekananda asked a similar question of his Guru, the blessed Saint of Dakshineshwar. And I can never forget the exquisite scene in the garden of Krishnashrama at Allahabad. Imagine a cold winter morning on the banks of the Ganges at Prayag, the river mists not yet dissolved by the rays of the morning sun, the Young Teacher Krishnaji seated on a low platform under the shadow of the spreading branches of a tree, a small gathering of a little over a hundred people seated on the ground enjoying the welcome warmth of the morning sun, and then an insistent voice from the small group asking the startling question: "Have you seen God—Yes or No?" The Teacher smiles, but does not answer. Once more the question is asked and the

answer is almost demanded, so eager is the questioner and the gentle voice of the Young Teacher, grave in its intensity and beautiful dignity, rings forth what I have always considered to be his message to the centuries to come: "Yes, I have seen God, because I have seen you." I want to dwell a little on this wonderful statement for though it is one of the most ancient declarations of sages and teachers of the past, yet it is a truth which every individual has to realize in the depths of his own being, before it can be a living power in his life. God has been seen in the splendour of the sunset, in the immensity of the stars in the heavens, in the wisdom of the sage and the teacher, in the love and compassion of the Buddha or the Christ. But says Krishnamurti: "God is not far off. For verily He is in your brother man, your neighbour. In him you will find the proof of the Existence of God." "Worship not the God who is far away, worship your neighbour," comes the startling but a very old statement. The recognition of this profound Truth is the beginning as well as the end of Spiritual Life.

It is because man has no faith in the Divine within him that he seeks the shelter, the protection of the Teacher. But no real Teacher can do more than repeatedly assert the ancient teaching: "Thou art That." Because of our lack of realization of this, there arise all the brood of fears.

In one of his addresses the Teacher summarizes the fears from which humanity suffers. Fear of

salvation, fear of gods, the tradition of right and wrong, fear of punishment, the enticements of reward, fear of public opinion, fear of loss and gain—financial, physical, emotional and mental—fear of life and death, fear of loneliness, fear of uncertainty, of authority, fear of discomfort—physical, emotional and mental—fear of desire, ambition, jealousy, envy, competition, pain and sorrow, fear of not expressing yourself. What is the cause of all these fears that bring in its wake so much of delusion? Because of our fears, we seek for comfort, we seek refuge in something outside ourselves and there arise a very fruitful crop of illusory resting places for the human spirit. How then shall we get rid of fear? “All sorrow arises from the awareness of oneself as a separate being; hence there is loneliness. Because of this delusion there is fear. The idea of a limited personal self having its own separate interests antagonistic to or apart from the interests of others is the product of a long course of evolution.” Says Krishnaji :

“The whole object of Nature is to create the individual who is self-conscious. Nature is the manifestation of Life. It conceals Life. The whole destiny and function of Nature is to produce the self-conscious individual conscious of himself as a separate limited entity, held in the bondage of limitation, knowing the separateness of you and I, of object and subject. Self-consciousness is the product of every effort to break down the barrier of

limitation; where there is no such effort as in Nature where there is the effortless of unconscious perfection, or in the liberated man who has reached the freedom of conscious perfection, self-consciousness does not exist or has become merged in the realization of unity with the Self or Life."

The individual who knows separation is the "subject" and he sees *outside* himself the sources of his joys and pains, of his comfort and his strength, of his ideals, his aspirations. The *fulfilment* of Life, of individual existence, is to realize that that which he conceived of as the *objective* is within himself. In himself is the subjective or the objective. In him is the totality of all experience, of all thought, of all emotion. His task is to realize that totality in the subjective, *i.e.*, in his own consciousness.

Within onself lies the whole universe of life, not of manifestation. Within this universe of life there is no time and space. Time and space lie outside it. So pure being, life, is outside time and space, it is impersonal, it is not thought, nor emotion, nor desire and yet is the end of all these. It is intuition. It is not to be found in objective external things, but in oneself. So life is the self of everything. The purpose of individual existence is to understand that self, to wear down the ego of reaction. Separation is limitation, sorrow, unhappiness, effort. All sorrow is caused by the illusion of the separate "I". It is because all the time this

limited I is ^{*}conscious dimly of the Self without limitation that there is effort to break down the barriers and limitations. Individuality is imperfect, is a segment merely of the totality and it is because it feels itself to be only a part, that it is all the time seeking to fulfil itself, to realize itself in the totality.

HOW SHALL WE REACH THIS WORLD OF REALITY

That which we call Reality, God or Life is not far away from us. In it we live, move and have our being. We are that life. Spiritual growth is the wearing down of the walls of the separate self. It is not the development or the culture of ability, the gaining of greater and greater power. Ability or efficiency either on the physical or superphysical planes is only an intensification of the separate self, not the getting rid of the limitations of the self. The goal, the true purpose of man, is to reach the absolute Life where there is no separation of you and I. Speaking of the developments of superphysical powers Krishnaji says: "You may go to the highest planes of manifestation, but it will always be the same thing in a finer degree. You may be clairvoyant or clairaudient; but if there is not in you that spirit of all-inclusive thought, of love, that exquisite poise of these two, then of what value is your ability to see something invisible?

It is irrelevant to your true purpose." There is no denial of the existence of higher planes, of the existence of beings who function on that, but they all belong to the world of Phenomena. No mere extension of knowledge or power on these planes can ever lead us to spirituality. The world of Reality is the world not of phenomena, but the world of the absolute, where there is neither subject nor object, but pure Being. That pure Being or Life manifests itself on the plane of thinking as pure thought and in the plane of emotion as pure feeling. They are not really separate, but the human mind for purposes of clear understanding makes these distinctions. The purity consists in the perfect poise of love and of reason, in the capacity of both to go out and meet every event without ever losing its perfect balance or poise, without reaction. Says Krishnaji :

"The world of Reality, the Truth which is the Self is the consummation of all love. Love includes all the divisions of its opposites—hatred, jealousy, envy, greed for possession and so on. To that Totality, I give the name Love. When one loves an individual, in that love is included jealousy, selfish possession and the anxious care with which one breeds that love. When one transcends that one is capable of loving every one irrespective of that object. Thus the process of attaining universal love is not a quantitative process by multiplying the number of people whom one loves in a

personal way. It is much more a question of gaining the *pure quality* of love, of freedom from the idea of separation." Such pure love does not require an object of affection. It is like the shining of the sun. It shines on all. As when the sun rises he floods the world with his own beauty and brings out in every leaf and flower all the delicate shades of colour, so the pure love that streams forth from the heart of a liberated man sheds its tender light on every one; and in the light of that love, all the hidden beauty of character, all the strength and beauty of thought and feeling are revealed to the loving eyes of perfect love. But such a love means an utter absence of likes and dislikes. There is neither attraction nor repulsion. The liberated man is like a great well of love and understanding, happy if people come and slake their thirst at the pool, but equally content if they reject. It is an absolutely spontaneous outpouring so far as the one who loves is concerned. The expression of such love must necessarily be as varied as the human beings who receive it.

In a similar way pure reason or pure thought is absolutely impersonal thought and judgment; we seldom see things as they are, for our vision is distorted by our personal reactions to the events that happen around us. It is when the personal element is completely eliminated that we are able to judge and think really freely and truly. The process of liberating thought and feeling from

purely personal reactions is a continuous one. Liberation is generally considered to be an achievement that comes at the end of our human evolution. It is more correct to consider it as a series of liberations. Whenever we learn to give our love without considering whether we like or dislike a person, then we have liberated a little of the imprisoned splendour within us. Whenever we eliminate completely the personal factor in the consideration of a subject, we flash upon it the light of eternity itself. Such a process implies a continual and constant self-examination, continual awareness and alertness, perpetual effort at understanding.

The elimination of the personal is often considered to be a state of negation. We are afraid of losing our individual and finite selves. We think of the wearing down of the walls of separateness as a process of annihilation. But it is rather that only when we cease to be personal that the Larger Life uses us as a channel; and such a manifestation of the totality of Life through an individual, who may have even temporarily cast off the limits of the personal, becomes the expression of his individual uniqueness. Such an expression is true creative activity; what is seen at such a rare moment is a flash of true genius, true vision. So true individual uniqueness does not manifest itself except in moments when we tear down the limiting walls of our egoism and touch the realm of the absolute. The sense of

separateness, of the "I," is then an obstacle to the expression of individual uniqueness. We must lose the smaller "self" to find the larger self in the Life Eternal.

What is the cause of all our sorrow, except our vain striving to appear to be better or wiser than our neighbour, our attempt to gratify our love of distinction. It was David Grayson who said: "How absolutely beautiful it is to be doing only what lies within your own capacities and is part of your own nature. It is like a great burden rolled off a man's back when he wants to appear nothing that he is not, or to take out of life only what is truly his own and to wait for something strong and deep within him or behind him to work through him." Such an attitude is the beginning of peace, of real wisdom. In the realm of the spiritual, the absolute, there are no grades, no low and high. When we forget for a moment our limited self, when we let the light of the Eternal shine through some small act, we manifest the same quality of absolute perfection which the Master manifests all the time. We are one with Him. Stature and grades belong to the plane of the phenomenal, where growth is measurable. Technical ability, power are all capable of being graded. But when we touch the realm of Being, then it is merely quality and not the question of quantity that is of importance.

The moment we realize this, there comes the absolute cessation of all personal conflicts, the

sense of perfect tranquillity. The true dignity and value of the individual is seen only when we realize that no one is higher or lower than ourselves; richer, more capable, more learned, more powerful? yes! These differences produce the feelings of greed, jealousy, etc. But when we see through someone the flashing of the Divine Life, we realize that we are ourselves that Life and Light. There is no feeling of inferiority, and consequently no feeling of jealousy, of hatred.

Such peace and tranquillity does not mean the absence of what are usually called difficulties. But there is the realization that what is of consequence is not what happens to one but the manner in which we meet external events. These happenings of daily life are like the marble in the hands of the sculptor of genius, who uses the technique of his art and releases the hidden beauty imprisoned within the rough block. Could we but let the Eternal Artist within us work through our minds and emotions, would He not make a thing of beauty out of the smallest, the most trivial event. Out of the sorrows and our agonies of the personal life we could compose a tragedy equal in its beauty to the highest creations of genius. It may be that for lack of necessary technical ability, our creations are formless but nevertheless they are of high enduring value. Every day we encounter rudeness, selfishness or ugliness. But if we could meet them all with perfect dignity, with kindness and complete

inner as well as outer impersonality, we could invest every such act with a beauty which could make it rank amongst the highest things of life. Life is essentially what we make of it, ugly or beautiful, according to the manner in which we use it. There is no real ugliness except that which we create out of the distortion or limitation of life. We release Beauty when we break down the barriers of self and allow the imprisoned splendour of God to shine.

Krishnaji's teaching with regard to individual uniqueness is best understood by the study of the conclusions to which modern philosophers and scientists have arrived on the nature of vital phenomena.

The discoveries of Einstein and the theory of relativity have demonstrated to us the utter inadequacy of the old concepts of science in the interpretation of the actual, and the so-called facts of science are unable to give us a complete presentation of the Truth. It is not only true of Mathematics and the physical sciences which are concerned with externality and quantity, but is even more strikingly illustrated in the sciences of Biology, Physiology and Botany. In the latter sciences, the methods of exact measurement are no doubt useful and even indispensable. The behaviour of biological organisms contains elements which are measurable. From the point of view of the physicist and the chemist, the organism is so

much matter and energy, and it is possible to establish laws of a quantitative character dealing with the conservation or degradation of energy. But these laws are utterly inadequate in the interpretation of the behaviour of a living organism. Its composition is always changing. It is parting with its substance and transmuting external dead matter into its own living substance, while preserving its form and life. No particle remains permanently. The life and structure are the only constant things in the body of a living animal. Its characteristics have come to it by inheritance and cannot be described in mechanical terms. In fact the formation and maintenance of organic structure cannot be explained by purely mechanistic conceptions. As the result of a great deal of research work done in what has been called New Physiology, Prof. J. S. Haldane, the brother of the late Lord Haldane, has conclusively shown that "our conception of an organism is different in kind, and not merely in degree, from our conception of a material aggregate" and that "the physico-chemical theory of life has not worked in the past and can never work. As soon as we pass beyond the most superficial details of physiological activity it becomes unsatisfactory. It breaks down completely when applied to fundamental physiological problems such as that of reproduction".

I have quoted above the considered opinion of one of the greatest of living physiologists

It is clear then that in Biology and Physiology we are dealing with phenomena, which so far as our present knowledge goes not only differ in complexity, but differ in kind from physical and chemical phenomena. We are dealing with a level of Reality higher than that of the inorganic world. When we are merely dealing with the abstractions of physical and mathematical quantities we are in the region of externality, of cause and effect. But when we are dealing with life, I am using that word in its biological sense, we are conscious of the existence of a new factor, an end which guides the minutest reactions of the organism. I will now ask leave to quote the opinion of one of the massive and yet acutest intellects of our time, the late Lord Haldane.

He says: "If we are to describe intelligibly the facts of heredity, of the transmission of modes of behaviour, and of the development and growth through a definite cause of life of an organism . . . we must employ other terms than those expressive of causes acting *ab extra* on materials external to them. We pass naturally to the notion of Life as the self-realization of what we may call an end as distinguished from an external cause, an end which is a moulding influence immediately present and not acting at a distance, an end which conserves itself and remains continuous and identical notwithstanding its constant change of the material in which it expresses

itself . . . It behaves as a living whole, self conserving throughout metabolism and change of material and it pursues a definite cause first of growth, then of decay. The individual inherits and maintains the distinctive characteristics of the species and when it has fulfilled its function of reproducing itself and transmitting to its descendants its own capacities and qualities, it passes away in the interests of the whole. During life it conducts itself, not like a machine, but with vastly greater delicacy. The work done by the blood corpuscles in taking up just the necessary oxygen and no more, by the kidney in selecting out and secreting injurious substances which it gets rid of in the urine; by the tissues in the metabolism by which carbohydrates are converted into glycogen; these and countless other phases in the activities of the living organisms are no mere illustrations of mechanical or external causation. They are more nearly analogous to what arises from the actuating spirit of a battalion which has been highly trained, where the men combine almost instinctively in carrying out the common purpose, ordered by a word of command and responded to as only a collection can respond, which is no mere collection of individuals, inasmuch as it forms a practised and cohesive social unit. But the organism does not really act as the battalion does. It acts only quasipurposively. What controls it is not conscious purpose, reflectively selected, but what belongs to

an order that is more than mechanical but less than intellectual. When we contemplate the living world we are contemplating it at the level of end as distinguished from the causes on the one hand, and from conscious purposes on the other, and our conceptions are those of a definite and special order.

"It is important to distinguish this end from conscious and intelligent choice. The kidneys, for instance, keep constant the purity of the blood from noxious substances with the utmost exactness and with a precision and delicacy that suggest self-directing intelligence in selection, but they really effect this regulation because, although they do not carry out any conscious purpose, they are living members of an organism whose end and whose existence in the conservation of that end the kidneys live in continuously subserving. For apart from their place in this whole they do not continue to live. They have a special and definite place in a community of organs and except as filling this place they are not kidneys. It is in the particular end which they fulfil that their life and identity consist and this end it is that requires constant change in their substance." (Lord Haldane, *The Reign of Relativity*.)

A living body is very different from a machine, an aggregate of parts which can be dissociated and afterwards put together again. The unity of the organism is wholly unlike this. It consists in its activity in maintaining its structure and activities

right through a life history. It is difficult to draw a line of demarcation between the organism and its environment. Do the blood and the lymph belong to the organism or its environment? A merely mechanical answer cannot be given. So of the gas in the lungs and the food in the intestines. It is the normal activity of structure that affords the only solution. It is the living whole which exercises regulation of the processes in which it is actual and which constitutes its life.

A living activity cannot be made intelligible apart from its relation to other living activities. The parts of a machine are intelligible in independence of and as external to each other and they can be put together by a process of addition. The structures and activities of the parts of a living whole appear quite differently. They are functions within a whole which are determined as such through control by ends.

I have dwelt at length on this most interesting conclusion of the New Physiology, that in dealing with vital processes we are dealing with a new and higher order of reality and that in this region any adequate presentation of truth requires not only the mechanical concepts of the Physical and Chemical sciences, but in addition the concepts which are peculiar to Biology, that it is only in terms of life that life can be expressed.

When we turn from the phenomena of mere biological life to those of personality and mind we

are faced by a similar characteristic. It is true that every human being has a body which consists of matter and is a living organism. But it is not merely as animals that we are interested in each other. It is in the region of personality, where man is treated as a freely and intelligently selecting mind, that our interest in each other is mainly centred. It is by our capacity to understand each other's thoughts and interpret each other's behaviour more or less correctly that the very possibility of human relationship arises. It is obvious that in this instance we are dealing with a still higher order of reality. Man is not only matter and energy, he is not only an animal organism, he is an intelligent, self-directing mind. To fully comprehend and describe him, we require concepts of three different orders of reality.

We now arrive at one of the most wonderful teachings which have been given out to us by Mr. Krishnamurti. We saw when we were considering the nature of an organism, that the characteristic of all vital phenomena is the presence of an end, which is a constantly moulding factor in the activity of every portion of that organism, and it is only that *end* which gives meaning or significance to such activity. In isolation a kidney ceases to be a kidney; only in relation to the whole can it ever function truly, *i.e.*, can it ever express its true individual uniqueness. A kidney as a separate entity is unreal. Its reality, its uniqueness,

is merely its relation to the whole. Everything that tends to intensify its separate individuality, *i.e.*, its life and interest as apart from the life of the whole, will only bring disease. Such disease will interfere with the harmonious working of the organ, in other words with the expression of its uniqueness.

Mr. Krishnamurti tells us that just as in all biological phenomena there is an ever present end moulding all vital activity, so in the case of all human beings there is a goal which is ceaselessly directing all human effort. That goal is the only *real* Teacher. It is that mysterious principle which teaches the tree its law of growth. Under the guidance of that Life spirit, the violet grows into a violet, the palm tree attains its own proper stature. It is the "individual uniqueness" which stamps upon everything its own peculiar quality. No one may, indeed no one can, ever interfere with its silent but irrepressible activity. One may hinder, delay, modify the manner of its expression. But the essential characteristics are there.

This has, sometimes, been interpreted into a statement that growth cannot be hastened under the guidance of a wise Teacher. A wise Teacher is like a gardener who creates the external conditions, the environment most favourable for the growth of the plant, who provides the kind of manure that is needed and arranges for the adequate supply of the water and sunlight that are required for the growth of the tender plant. The Teacher realizes that his

business is to wisely arrange conditions on the physical plane so that the human spirit may grow without twist or warp, into straightness and beauty. He sheds on all the radiance of his love, even though in our ignorance we allow the shadow of our personality to come between us and his never ceasing love. For we need that love in order that we may grow, though we shall realize that that great radiance is ever within us. But he is *never* a crutch to lean on, never a refuge from trouble and distress. For no one knows better than he, the educative value of experience. Have we gone through great sufferings and agonies? He rejoices, for he knows that the end of our illusions is at hand and that presently we shall see the Truth. We need him who is the Flower of our humanity, as much as the tree requires the wise care of the gardener, or the little boy or girl in the schoolroom or in the home needs the loving guidance of the teacher or the parent, and yet it is profoundly true that the most perfect wisdom of the Master cannot and will not save us from one *necessary* tear. For tears and smiles are the very stuff of which our spiritual texture is woven.

THE AGE THAT IS PASSING: THE SCIENTIFIC AGE

It is now time to consider the special characteristics of the age that has just passed away and the special relationship of Krishnaji to the people who

are living in the present day. The nineteenth century is essentially the age of Physical Science. Science had just succeeded in its long struggle with theology and religion and asserted its triumphant superiority with all the aggressive arrogance of youth and inexperience. Its speculations pervaded every region of human inquiry. Nothing was to be considered to be true until it was justified before the bar of the intellect. As a consequence it became part of the intellectual faith of the age that exact science, specially natural science, could solve all the problems of human life. Everything was dissected and analyzed and all the delicate refinements of the methods of scientific observation and measurements were pressed into the service of knowledge. Nothing was too sacred to escape the scrutiny of science. Everything was noted and examined with the most marvellous accuracy and the result was an amazing knowledge of the facts about man and the Universe, tabulated and carefully classified. Every department of human knowledge strove for recognition as an exact science. Students of Economics and History and Psychology aspired to raise these subjects to the dignity of a science.

It was inevitable that religion after having suffered defeat at the hands of science should have gradually yielded to the dominant influence of the times, and the finest intellects of the age began to study religious phenomena with the same patient devotion that had achieved such brilliant results in the department

of Physics and Chemistry and Astronomy. The study of the varieties of religious experience gradually produced a vast mass of information inspiring the hope that a scientific religion would be very soon an accomplished fact. The same spirit of investigation led to the growth of the study of the deeper powers latent in man. In the Theosophical Society we have very ample evidence of the influence of the Scientific Spirit. Our President was one of the first women to receive a thoroughly scientific training and she has among the large number of books that she has written and published one or two books of lectures on Science. She herself tried to scientifically expound religion; and her enormous success in India has been very largely due to her capacity for reconciling the teachings of the ancient Hindu faith with the teachings of modern scientists of the West. But I think it is when we come to the writings of Bishop Leadbeater that we find the spirit of the scientific investigator manifested in all its completeness. Accuracy, precision, extraordinarily patient investigation of every detail combined with a lucidity and clarity of expression make him a recognized authority in the field of scientific occultism. It is possible that many of his interpretations of the facts which he seems to have observed with extraordinary care may prove to be faulty or inadequate. But that is true of every scientific observer, of Newton, and Darwin, of Sir J. J. Thompson or

Einstein. Whatever may be the verdict of posterity on this, to me there seems no reason to doubt that to the science of the superphysical, to the discovery of the phenomena of the different planes of Nature and the many powers latent in man, Bishop Leadbeater's contribution has been a great one. If even a fraction of the facts, the existence of which occultists assert, be true, then occultism has enriched knowledge by more new facts than almost any other science has done. Lest there should be any misunderstanding about the sense in which the word occultism is used, it is useful to define it as the Science of Superphysical Planes. At present our knowledge of it is confined to either tradition or the contemporary testimony of a small number of experts who claim to have the power of seeing things hidden from the majority. But Occultism is a science no matter how incomplete our knowledge of it may be, and some day it may claim to the same authority as is claimed for all the exact sciences, like Physics, Chemistry or Botany.

While I fully concede to Occultism all the dignity and authority of an exact science, at the same time it must, by the very nature of its method of inquiry, by the order of reflection involved in the intellectual processes required for the investigation of occult phenomena, share all the limitations of scientific truth.

I have dwelt at some length on this part of the subject because it has a very important bearing

on the relation between occultism and the message which Mr. Krishnamurti is giving to the world. Occultism as defined earlier is merely the science of superphysical matter and superphysical force. To be able to understand the laws which regulate such forces is to add very greatly to one's efficiency, to one's power of controlling the forces of Nature. No wise man will ever consider such knowledge as useless, any more than he will condemn the discoveries in the department of electricity such as the radio or television. But it is not impertinent to ask the question : " It is true that human beings to-day are able to broadcast a speech so that a person thousands of miles away will be able to listen to a speaker in Benares. But has any corresponding improvement been made in the quality of the speech since the time of the Buddha or the Christ or of Sankaracharya and Plato ? " To ask such a question is not to deny the utility of modern science. No one need grudge to science its brilliant achievements, no one need withhold the just measure of praise or admiration for the heroic patience with which scientific men have devoted themselves to the service of Truth. But no scientist will deny that when we are dealing with absolute values as distinguished from mere utilities, we are moving on different dimension of thought altogether. When we speak of the truth of science we are largely concerned with quantitative relations. But truth in poetry, in art, in the region of beauty is of an

entirely different order of reality. We are here dealing with quality rather than quantity.

Occult science stands in the same relationship to spirituality, as natural physical science does to poetry, art and beauty. They belong to two entirely different dimensions of reality. No extension of our knowledge of physical science can ever lead us to the development of our æsthetic faculties. The modern age has made remarkable progress in the application of science to the arts of life. Life in modern times is certainly far more comfortable than it was in the days of the Greeks. But it is doubtful if in our feeling for beauty, for art and poetry we can claim to have made corresponding progress. It is of the utmost importance to realize that science and art belong to two different levels of reality. Science is essentially analytical and is an abstraction. For the purpose of scientific investigation the movement of the strings of a violin may be resolved into a number of vibrations. Yet the musician will tell us that the science of sound with all its intricately beautiful theories and demonstrations can never reveal to us the secret of music, its mysterious influence on the human heart, its marvellous power of rousing strange and beautiful emotions within us. No musician will ever deny the validity of the truth of the science of sound. But he will claim that they have nothing to do with music, as the expression of the subtlest moods and emotions of the human heart. Great

musical ability is quite compatible with a complete ignorance of the science of sound. If a man have but the ear for music, it matters little at what level of understanding he may be as a student of Acoustics ; he can enter into the world of music at any stage.

Occultism like science is an abstraction of the human mind. For purposes of mathematical investigation, we may abstract certain features of a cube of wood, like its lines and angles and construct a geometry out of them. Such a geometry is useful and is relatively true. So also we can speak of a man's vehicles as consisting of different grades of matter and yet just as a cube is something more than its geometry, so also man is something more than his vehicles. The study of these vehicles is as important and as valuable as the study of human physiology. But to understand the living man, we must study him as an integrated whole. No study of the parts, by the process of physical or superphysical analysis, can ever be a mode of approach to the heart of that mystery which we call " Man ".

It is of the utmost importance to bear this distinction in mind. In the musical world, we do not recognize Lord Raileigh as an authority on musical values, however much authority he may claim in the field of the science of sound. In precisely a similar way no occultist, however exact his knowledge of superphysical worlds may be, can ever be considered as a *necessarily* competent judge

of spiritual values. Much of the confusion of thought that prevails amongst us, members of the Theosophical Society, is due to the habit of trying to reconcile ideas which by their own nature are irreconcilable, which lie in two totally different dimensions of reality. Let us take one typical instance—ceremonies. Bishop Leadbeater asserts that, by the correct performance of ceremonial, forces are released which can be utilized for human progress. Whether such forces are actually released is a question on which only clairvoyants can possibly express an opinion. Assuming the correctness of the assertion, there is no contradiction involved in the statement that in the attainment of that happiness of which Krishnaji speaks, *only* a man's own thought and feeling are concerned, just as in the appreciation of a great book or a great work of art, however useful it may be to be surrounded by teachers and books and a beautiful environment, the only factor that counts is the sense, the feeling for beauty of thought and emotion, for colour or sound. This is so obviously the case in the appreciation of literary and artistic values that one is surprised at the confusion that exists in our mind when we are dealing with spiritual values. Bishop Leadbeater himself has told us that in the release of forces during the celebration of the Mass, the character of the priest, his purity of mind and body are only very slightly relevant considerations. It is almost a mechanical arrangement. It is apparently possible for a very

dissolute and unscrupulous priest, provided he is efficiently trained in the duties of his office, to release these forces. Such a priest even though he may be the head of the greatest Church, even though he may wield all the powers conferred on him at ordination is absolutely incompetent as judge of spiritual values. His judgment may very well be far less valuable than that of a very ordinary layman who possesses the faculty of spiritual intuition.

In conclusion allow me to say a few words about ourselves. It has become the fashion to unduly depreciate ourselves. While we gladly renounce the role of the chosen people of the Masters, while we willingly cease to think of ourselves as superior to the crowd, there is no need to develop an inferiority complex. Much work has been done by members of the Society under the leadership of our venerable President. During the last few years, we have been examined, and tested, psychoanalyzed. Under the influence of collective enthusiasm, of mass hypnotism, we made many noble efforts and sacrifices. The influence of the Society in the world is entirely a creation of our Great President. It is the embodiment of an extraordinary energy selflessly devoted to the highest and noblest ends. I do not forget the work of the two Founders. But to most of us, the Theosophical Society is identified with a life which has been continuously lived in the service of others for a period of nearly 60 years. Great as is

the privilege of such leadership, it has its inevitable dangers. One of them is the destruction of initiative in action and in thinking of individual members. To do what she is doing, to accept her standards of value in the place of one's own, is a temptation all the more irresistible, because of the extraordinary moving power of her personality. To be able to understand the message of the Teacher it was necessary to break away from the hypnotism of group thought and group enthusiasm, to lose for the time being the strength and comfort of her leadership. For so long we have been accustomed to ask her for orders. She is now asking us to give heed to the message of the Teacher, Mr. Krishnamurti, who bids us look only to the God within us for strength and leadership. "Be your own guide, your own lawgiver." The result is an amazing one. The Society as a whole, every individual of it, is examining and testing himself and I am afraid also others. All the longings and desires so long repressed by work, collective enthusiasm, are coming to the surface. This is what psychoanalysts do for the curing of our psychic diseases. On a large scale the teacher has psychoanalyzed us. He is helping every one of us to discover our true selves. Friends, let us be patient with each other. All this confusion of thought and feeling are inevitable. But let us not for a moment forget that the existence of this trouble is to us the very proof of the earnestness and sincerity of members of the Society. To leave the

Society, to give up the responsibilities we have undertaken is easy. But to understand is so much more difficult. It is not any one's being in the Society or leaving it that matters. What is important is what each one of us is doing with his own life. To discover one's work and do it with a will, and to realize that in the doing of it as perfectly as one can lies our freedom, that is the beginning of real wisdom. Many of us feel sad, because many forms of group life have been broken up. But we shall contemplate this necessary destruction with greater tranquillity when we discover that groups may disappear, but that kindness and friendship remain, and so long as these endure new forms of fellowship will be built up.

So, friends, let us not trouble our hearts about the future of the Society, about the increase or decrease of its membership. If we keep alive in our hearts, the spirit of love and brotherhood, of real understanding, we shall inevitably be a great power in the world for peace and unity. Even if we are only fifty or a hundred, we shall change the face of the world. So great is the power of Truth to transform and change.

THIRD LECTURE

THE FUTURE OF
THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

BY ERNEST WOOD

I HAD intended to speak this morning on "*Buddhi-Yoga* and the Greatest Object of Desire," as depicted in the *Bhagavad Gitā*, but about two weeks ago the President informed me that she thought that it would be very useful if the subject of "The Future of the Theosophical Society" were considered by all the Convention Lecturers this year. I have taken it up with a deep sense of responsibility, and I am especially sorry that she is not able to preside this morning as, in discussing present conditions in the Society, which bear on the future, and expressing discontent with those, I may seem to be criticizing her management or policy, and that I would wish to do only in her presence. However, the President is not responsible for the present organization, and no doubt her desire to have this subject thoroughly discussed indicates that she would like to hear our opinions as to how we

should adapt our Society to the changing times, in what ways a form of organization adopted in the Victorian Era should now be changed.

For the first time in my life I am writing out a lecture, intending to read it. My reason for this is that I want to be exact and complete in the expression of my thoughts on the subject of the future of the Theosophical Society. By special request of the President, Dr. Besant, I am giving my own views, which are the result of a good many years' acquaintance with the subject, considerable experience of the Society's activities in many parts of the world and also—since on this occasion I feel bound, as it were by royal command, to speak with no reserve whatever—of some direct contact with the Masters, both in personal form, and in that condition which I think they call their world.

The first thing for us to consider is whether the future of the Society is in our hands or not. Are we to proceed to determine future conditions by dealing with present causes, or must we wait for some divine revelation or intervention? I am proceeding on the assumption that the future lies at least to some extent in our hands, and that it is necessary for us to think and act, and to do it without delay.

THE DECLINE IN MEMBERSHIP

Almost all over the world there are now what may be called three parties among our members.

One, a minority, is quite satisfied to carry on the exact conditions that we have had in the Society in the last fifteen years, even though they may have to do so with a fraction of our present membership. The second party, also a minority, is much dissatisfied, and wants to change to more impersonal conditions of leadership. The third party—I think a majority—is simply waiting to see what will happen, waiting for a sign or a word, or for the guidance of the drift of events. Present conditions are that the second minority (those who want a change) are leaving the Society in large numbers, and the first minority (those who want things as they have lately been) are holding firmly to the old position. This process may cause the Society rapidly to consolidate into a specific dogmatism.

It has been my duty during the last two years to supplement my own experience and thought with a close study of the statistics of the Society, and the reports of the General Secretaries of our forty-six National Societies, and other officers scattered in non-sectionalized countries. I find this year that there is a net loss of about 4,500 members, and as the new members amount to about 2,700, we have lost over 7,000 old members during the year. Last year the figures were similar to those of this year, so we have lost about one-third of our old members within two years. This has no precedent, as before that, since the time when

the Society was organized on its present lines, we have only once or twice had a loss in membership in any year, and those years showed only a small decline, due to local, not world-wide, conditions.

The present continual dropping out of members who no longer care to attend their Lodges occurs to some extent because, to put it in the words of one General Secretary, they find them unwilling to permit the assimilation into the general body of Theosophy of the views which are held by Mr. Krishnamurti. This inadmissibility of assimilation, when clearly acknowledged, is defended on the ground that Krishnaji's main attitude is incompatible with Theosophy. Krishnamurti would have us modify our traditional attitude towards two classes of people, who have been designated respectively "Elder Brothers" and "Younger Brothers". What we may call the older party holds the belief that we must obey the former and guide or govern the latter—some say guide and some say govern. This to them is practical Theosophy; whereas the other view is that such a policy is a hindrance to the unfoldment of life in any person, whatever may be his condition or stage, and that if at any time any man is true only to his own best judgment and best feelings and deepest desires (or briefly, is true to himself) he will be unfolding or realizing his own life to the fullest extent possible for him in that moment.

This does not preclude his adopting an opinion or carrying out a suggestion made by somebody else, if before doing so he has used his own intelligence to the fullest extent, and then decided that in his opinion this is the most probable truth or the best thing to do under the given circumstances. But it does mean that if any person stops thinking for himself on any matter of importance, thinking : "Oh, it is useless for me to think about this matter, because somebody else who knows more than I do has already settled the matter, or is in a position to do so," he will be committing suicide from the spiritual point of view, or from the standpoint of unfoldment or realization of his own life. I think this must be the chief reason why superior intelligences, such as Masters, do not enter more commonly into the visible field of human life. They would be taken as authorities of this kind, and people would cease to employ their faculties upon the business which karma places before them. Every man has his own problems in life ; they are all different, and each man must live his own life. As soon as you have called any man a younger brother you have judged him, and thereby classed him as unfit to exercise as much freedom in his affairs as you would like in yours.

These two views are clearly in direct opposition. What we have to do to prevent the present decay (due to the departure of minorities) from continuing, is to get together with great determination

to discuss this question thoroughly, and put before ourselves all the facts and considerations which are necessary to form a judgment as to which of these two opposing views is compatible with Theosophy. I do not mean that even then the Society can pronounce a decision, but since we are a Society, we may do our thinking to some extent together, even though in the nature of things we must ultimately form and hold our individual opinions.

THEOSOPHY AND THE SOCIETY

I have used the word Theosophy here as a kind of test or touchstone. To me, it is the most ridiculous thing if there is no immediate and necessary connection between Theosophy and the Theosophical Society, and that is why I want to see placed before our statement of three Objects some such words as: "The Theosophical Society exists for the promotion of Theosophy, and therefore our objects are so and so." It is one of the greatest obstacles to the adoption of our Society by intelligent and educated persons that when an enquirer comes and asks what the Society stands for, among the attitudes of our time, we are not in a position to say outright and clearly that the Theosophical Society stands for the promotion of Theosophy and nothing else, except what that implies. With such a statement before them, our present Objects would

indicate our purpose very well. If this is not our purpose, it would be better to change the name and not call it the Theosophical Society, just as the Theosophical Society which existed in Europe somewhat more than a hundred years ago changed its name to the Swedenborgian Society upon the death of its great leader. We had better call it the Blavatsky Society, the Besant Society, the Brotherhood Society, the Masters' Society, or something else, any one of which could in my opinion be an important Society in the world. All these titles ring very pleasantly in my ears.

Some may think that the union of Theosophy and the T. S. involves a dogma. I remember how H. P. B. emphasized one of the old rules of the Society, worded to prevent such a possibility, as follows: "No Fellow, or Officer, or Council of the Theosophical Society, or of any Section or Branch thereof, shall promulgate or maintain *any doctrine* as being that advanced or advocated by the Society." But there is no dogma or doctrine involved in this case, because it is still left open to discussion what Theosophy is. Or rather, it is not merely left open to discussion, but if we say that the Society exists to promote Theosophy we are at once compelled to discuss it in all its bearings, and thereby it becomes extremely unlikely that a settled dogmatism can be established. Dogmatism comes in by the back door, because we have failed to put the name of our business on the front gate.

It is sometimes said that we need not fear for the strength of the Society, because those who remain within it are the best members and they will once more gradually add to their numbers. The danger here is that they will add members of one kind. Consider a small Lodge, of the type that are the chief source of new membership in the Society. There are generally perhaps a dozen people at its meetings, at which there may be one or two enquirers. The enquirer comes to the Lodge a few times, finds there an outlook, and sometimes a creed, to which he cannot assent, and ceases to come, or finds one that he likes, and remains. So people drawn into the Society through these agencies are mostly of the same kind as those already in. And if a dogma has the upper hand, the Society may grow strongly in numbers but weaker in spirituality, until a man of genius like Krishnamurti comes along, who is strong enough to cause a revolution in the Society. Then the pacifically-minded quietly slip away, and a few remain to struggle. It is the custom to speak slightingly of those who thus drop out, but so do the orthodox Churches regard those who find their teaching and atmosphere not to their taste.

It may be pointed out that the libraries which are available in Lodges contain all kinds of Theosophical books. The reading of the newcomer and very often even of the older member is, however, confined to a very limited selection of those books, and

generally that selection is made with the advice of someone having established views. A case in point on a larger scale is our practice of publishing a list of books recommended for study. Similarly many of the propaganda leaflets issued for enquirers are most damaging to our cause in their dogmatism, and are likely to drive away people who wish to be free thinkers in matters of Religion and Philosophy. There are also sentences in the statement about the Theosophical Society which appears in the supplementary pages of *The Theosophist*, and at the end of many books, which certainly commit the Society to definite views in the eyes of the public or the enquirer. For example, it is said that our purpose is to "revive religious tendency," and that we "see every religion as an expression of the Divine Wisdom." It is, on the contrary, because they are mostly distortions of the Divine Wisdom that the Theosophical Society needs to exist, as a corrective or at least as a free platform or meeting ground. Is it not a distortion of religion which is ruining India in the Round Table Conference to-day?

I should like for a moment carefully to consider the function of the Theosophical Society.

THE NATURE OF THE SOCIETY

In the world there are two kinds of societies—those of seekers and those of spreaders. Of the former kind there are many modern societies, for

example, a philosophical society exists to study all existing ideas on the nature of man and his relation to the world, and any new ideas on the subject which may arise. Geographical, chemical and astronomical societies exist for the same function, in their respective spheres of study. In all such societies, each individual may draw his own conclusions, and believe or suspend his judgment as he likes. These societies as such declare no belief, draw no conclusions. At a scientific convention a speaker may advocate, let us say, the theory of continental drift, but the society does not promulgate that or any other idea. Schools which teach Geography may do that.

Societies of spreaders exist to propagate and popularize certain fixed propositions, and the chief examples of these are the various sects of the religions, which definitely fix upon an idea or a teaching and make it their business to convince people of its truth, or else to frighten or entice them into that closing of the doors of the mind which is commonly called belief.

One weakness of the T.S. lies in its inability to make up its mind to which of these two classes to belong. Its having the definite name Theosophical, and its emphasis on propaganda, put it in the second class, but its three Objects put it in the first. It strives to form a brotherhood, to compare religions, and to investigate the occult. Such mere seeking is not especially Theosophical.

From the beginning the Founders and propagandists of the Society have explained these objects, saying that pursuit of them is intended to lead to certain conclusions, which are called Theosophical ideas, such as that life is fundamentally one, that religions have a common basis, and that man is immortal and his future contains splendour without limit.

The Society exists to promulgate Theosophy. Was not Mme. Blavatsky a propagandist for certain views? Is not Dr. Besant one? And almost all others who ever speak or write under the auspices of the Society? For myself, I say without hesitation that I find myself in the position of one who wishes to put forward certain very definite ideas, because I believe that they are correct and that men would be happier and stronger if they lived according to those ideas. I hope in time to win a respectably wide acceptance for that outlook and those opinions which I have called "Natural Theosophy".

The Society has a message for the world, and that message is Theosophy. But it is very important to affirm that every speaker on our platform and writer in our magazines is free to promote the ideas of Theosophy according to his own understanding of them. Therefore, although the T.S. is very obviously in practice a missionary Society *it does not fix the form of its dogma*, but allows equally the expression of different views. Nothing could be more obvious than that our membership consists of people who have more or less made up their minds

about general Theosophical ideas. Others are enquirers, and they are outside. Still, we have to fight against any tendency to fix or crystallize its teaching.

There is room in the Society for any number of prominent propagandists, or leaders, or whatever word may indicate the people who focus ideas. The joy of it is that these people are *friends*, not opponents. They try to understand one another, but even when they cannot do that, they love and respect one another, and work side by side, though in their respective ways. So freedom in the T. S. means in practice freedom to form your own opinion as to what Theosophy is, or freedom to follow or adopt the opinion of somebody else. That *freedom* is an essential feature of the Society. As long as that exists the views of Mme. Blavatsky, those of Mrs. Besant, those of Mr. Krishnamurti or those of anybody else, can be freely *advocated* or *criticized* on the Society's platform. If this freedom is understood the Society will not fall into dogmatism, and present minorities may become majorities, though our Society should of course ignore majorities and minorities, or the majorities should be very solicitous that the minorities should suffer no disabilities.

THE INNER SCHOOL

There are two or three elements in our organization which produce an effect contrary to

this perfect freedom. First I must mention one which acts, though absolutely unintentionally, as a nucleus of crystallization—the identification, in many minds, of the Society and the Eastern School. I am not speaking against the view, held by many members both in and out of that School, that the Masters are behind the Society, but against the idea that no one is really in the heart of the Society unless he is in that School. Such a conception puts the views of the head of that School in an authoritative position in the Society, and tends to cause limitation in the type of our members, and therefore crystallization. I am thinking especially of Mr. Jinarajadasa's recent article in *The Adyar Theosophist*, entitled "The Future of the Theosophical Society, with or without the Masters". In that he adjured us most earnestly not to "throw away the baby with the bath water"—the baby in this case being the Masters, and the article giving the idea that the E. S. is essential to the Masters' connection with the Society. On the contrary, I would claim the Masters for the Society. Our Society takes interest in all great Teachers, whether they appear physically or psychically. It cannot be said that the T. S. rejects their spirit. The E. S. was founded later.

Consider the position of an earnest man or woman who has been studying the problems of life for many years and at last comes into contact with Theosophy through the Society. How can you say

to such a person : " Wait two or three years, prove yourself worthy by Lodge work, and then you can be admitted to the heart of the Society, if you have in the meantime attained a certain belief in particular persons " ? To earnest and capable persons not to be in the heart of a Society is not to be in it at all. I want to get rid of the idea that we are preaching freedom and practising authority. Our position in this matter should be made absolutely clear.

This view is not exaggerated. In 1890, Mrs. Besant defended H. P. B. against the attacks of the outside world, and also reproached some other members with neglect of her defence, when she was hideously maligned. She wrote, in the magazine *Lucifer* : " If H. P. B. is a true Messenger, opposition to her is opposition to the Masters, she being their only channel to the western world." I may not be wrong in assuming that a similar statement, perhaps enlarged to include one or two very close associates of Dr. Besant's, expresses the attitude of most of the E. S. members towards her to-day. I am not saying that Dr. Besant approves of this view, but that this is in fact what happens. I am also not forgetting that the E. S. is separate from the T. S., as H. P. B. herself said, writing in *Lucifer* in 1891. She quoted the rule that the " Esoteric Section has no official or corporate connection with the Exoteric Society," and added that to make this perfectly clear she would thenceforth drop the name

Esoteric Section of the T. S. and call it simply the Eastern School of Theosophy. I do not wish to speak against any system of yoga or self-training that may possibly exist in the Eastern or any other School, but against the effect of the idea that those who do not belong to it do not want the Masters, and the Masters at their best, and do not belong to the "heart of the Society," as is claimed. Almost the whole Society is hungry for the Masters in their Master form of the one Life, just as people are hungry for Shri Krishna and Christ and Buddha in the same Life, even when they are not prepared to accept any mediator.

It is with reluctance that I have spoken against the E. S., which is, after all, Dr. Besant's private School. But as we have with difficulty gathered together a band of open-minded people, why create a division among them in the name of the Masters, whose one thought is to secure the unity of mankind? Having spoken on this subject for this first time, I do not want to make a cause of the matter. I have spoken my thoughts, as Dr. Besant desired, and I would prefer not to allude to this matter again.

MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT MASTERS

Although there has been much discussion about the status of "younger brothers," some holding that they should seek the personal guidance of

elders or receive their influence through ceremonials, and others maintaining that if you cannot find God everywhere you cannot find him anywhere, it is the question of the nature of Masters that is most prominent, because some declare that they are not satisfied that the Society should reflect their spirit—there must be personal orders from them through recognized intermediaries, otherwise the Society will tear itself away from their influence.

Dr. Besant frankly conducts her personal activities according to orders of Masters, received by herself or by others in whom she has confidence, and her followers generally look forward hopefully to the day when they will also be able to direct their activities by such orders. On the contrary, Krishnamurti says: "Do not seek Masters, but be your own Master." When asked if he is not himself in the position of a Master, he replies; "I have realized certain truth; I have attained certain freedom. All can do the same if they will take the means. Face the experiences of your own life and deal with them according to your own best judgment. Do not ask any others to *decide* what you should do. This is the quickest and best way for all men." Opposed to this is the theory that your own conscience may be the conscience of a fool.

As I have said that the belief in Masters is not inconsistent with Krishnaji's position, I had better elucidate this idea, as it seems to be not very widely

understood. To many Krishnamurti is what we would call a Master. He says: "Disregard my appearance and pay attention to your true self." I submit that the Masters say exactly the same thing.

In one of the letters written to Mr. Sinnett, replying to Mr. Sinnett's desire to have a vision of him, the Master Koot Hoomi said: "I care very little for external intercourse." It may be presumed that as he had some object in view for the benefit of humanity, if external intercourse had been useful for that, he would have cared for it very much indeed. In another letter: "It is just because they preach too much 'the Brothers' and too little Brotherhood that they fail."

The Masters are surely those men who have become masters of life or have entered into life. That life is what they have called their world, and our world is the world of forms which men and cats and trees are making life after life, like children making sand castles and mud pies. But they who have realized the one Life, so that they no longer need to make sand castles and mud pies for their own satisfaction, are not thereby cut off from us men. Therefore our world is also theirs, but as one of them put it "outside the precincts". Therefore a person like Krishnamurti, if he has really realized that one Life, is in the position of a Master in the art of life, and he, like all such masters, as he wanders on our beaches and in our gardens, can remind us of it when we forget. I take it that such

has always been the function of great Teachers like Christ and Krishna and Buddha. It seems to me that all those Teachers directed attention *away* from their own personal forms. I may perhaps mention that on the three solitary occasions on which Shri Krishna told Arjuna that he would now give him the greatest secret or the most occult truth (*guhyaattama*) he immediately explained that it was the one Life in which all else exists, and said it was that which should be revered and sought. "Those who worship the gods go to the gods," said he, "but those who worship me come to me." I think that a careful reading of the records of the Masters' association with Madame Blavatsky and Mr. Sinnett will show that this is also what they were aiming at, not at the building of superior sand castles and mud pies for us to admire and copy. The pressure of the one Life is ever upon all of us. To make us conscious of this *internal* intercourse is that for which the Masters care. They stand and knock at the inner door of our hearts, not at the outer door of our creed and our purse.

H. P. B. used to say that the personality of the Master is an illusion. The personality is not the Master, and I am sure that the Masters do not want us to think of them, appeal to them, and admire them in such forms. Surely it should be illuminating to us when Krishnamurti said that though in his youth he used to see the Master, the Maitreya Bodhisattva and the Buddha, he had not

really known them until he went beyond them. The Master's form, like that of Krishnamurti, is a sign-post, but it is not a goal. If personal intercourse were beneficial to us men and women, do you not think that a great many of those who have entered into the light would be standing among us to-day in their personal forms? Do you think that that would not have been provided for in the economy of things?

The question naturally arises: "Do the Masters, Morya and Koot Hoomi and others actually exist as living men, like Krishnamurti?" There is very good evidence for their existence, but even so it is of little personal importance, except to those people to whom they have reason to speak. I cannot imagine that they are standing there waiting to respond to those who, having heard of them, make applications or supplications to them, offering their services in the service of mankind. It is easier for me to feel that those who from an overflowing heart live a life of love for their fellows naturally make their contacts with the Masters' world, and thereby become one with their reality, beyond the necessity of contact with their personal forms. H. P. B. also seems to have had a similar idea in mind when she replied to someone who wrote and asked to be put in touch with the Brothers: "Do you know so little of the laws of their order as not to understand that by this very act of yours—which was entirely unsolicited and a spontaneous proof of your loyalty—you have drawn their attention to you already, and

that you have established relations with them yourself? . . . It is not within our power to do anything for you more. Occultism is not like Christianity, which holds out to you the false promise of mediatorial interference and vicarious merit." Somewhat similarly, she wrote in an article in *The Theosophist* (July, 1884): "When, therefore, people express a desire to 'see a Mahatma,' they really do not seem to understand what it is they ask for. How can they, by their physical eyes, hope to see that which transcends that sight? Is it the body—mere shell or mask—they crave or hunt after? And supposing they see the body of a Mahatma, how can they know that behind that mask is concealed an exalted entity? By what standard are they to judge whether the Maya before them reflects the image of a true Mahatma or not? And who will say that the physical is not a Maya? Higher things can be perceived only by a sense pertaining to those higher things. And whoever therefore wants to see a real Mahatma must use his intellectual sight. He must so elevate his Manas that its perception will be clear and all mists created by Maya must be dispelled, His vision will then be bright and he will see the Mahatma wherever he may be, for, being merged into the sixth and the seventh principles, which are ubiquitous and omnipresent, the Mahatmas may be said to be everywhere . . . The highest interest of humanity, as a whole, is their special concern, for

they have identified themselves with that Universal Soul which runs through Humanity, and he who would draw their attention must do so through that Soul which pervades everywhere . . ."

To me, failure to realize the *universality* of the Masters is a great mistake. It denies the supreme power of qualities like thought and love and courage, which I cannot but think of as the best receptacles for whatever blessing and instruction may come from them to us, and not only receptacles but also channels, if the simile is not too material. The following little poem of Krishnaji's expresses my own view.

“ Love not the shapely branch,
Nor place of its image, alone in thy heart—
It dieth away . . .
Love the whole tree . . .
Then thou shalt love the shapely branch,
The tender and the withered leaf,
The shy bud and the full blown flower,
The fallen petal and the dancing height,
The splendid shadow of full love.
Ah, love life in its fullness.
It knoweth no decay.”

I have no taste for going into a cave with a candle in order to worship the sun. The Masters are everywhere and always, in fact, nearer to us than any material thing or any other person. Outwardly, they may or may not have much knowledge or

psychic powers, but they never lose sight of the one Life, unlimited by forms having the qualities of space and time.

I do not want to leave an impression that a new theory of Masters is being created, to dovetail together the generally accepted idea of Masters with the idea of the unity of liberated men in one Life. There is practically no difference of opinion in the Society on the subject of the existence of Masters. That is generally recognized as a part of the reasonable explanation of the working of the machinery of reincarnation, karma and liberation. But as to their functions in relation to human evolution, as to whether they work externally or through minds, there is a great difference of opinion, and everywhere I find some resistance to the comparatively recent tendency to make them into invisible arbitrary rulers, and to set up a cult in which they are appropriated by an organized or semi-organized body, as Christ was appropriated by the Churches.

If a man is doing his very best, and is true to the best that *he* knows, he is bound to be receiving as much of the Masters' influence or friendship as he possibly can. If our understanding rises to what they have called their mind-plane, their ideas become our ideas, we think their thoughts with them, and there is nothing to be gained by insisting that the ideas or purposes are theirs, not ours. Masters' work and orders are surely a question of

our being attuned to their spirit and their law, which is our own true spirit and law. Their teaching is an intuition, not usually peculiar or distinguishable from what we call our own thought, which is probably never entirely our own.

I am not denying the possibility of a quite definite kind of intercourse with them. In fact, it seems to me that I have been helped a large number of times when I have been thinking out various subjects, and writing articles and books. Ideas clearing up difficulties have been put before me as though by another intelligence. With this there has been the sense of somebody present, and I have been accustomed to think of that somebody as a certain one of the Masters. On occasions there have also been an audible voice and a visible personal form. I have, of course, no means of knowing for certain whether a Master was there or not, in personal form, because the human mind has such a variety of possibilities of subconscious mental activities. On the other hand, I have certainly seen a man in his subtle body, learned from him his name and place of residence, and afterwards gone to his home, far away, and found him there. In my experience, the idea of authority is repugnant to the Master. It has always been the function of the great Teachers, such as Buddha, Shri Krishna and the Christ, to remind us of *our own* divinity, not to guide our lives in particular. Some will say that H. P. B. spoke much about Master's orders, that she

visualized her connection with him frequently in those terms. From my point of view this was one of her weaknesses.

OTHER DIFFICULTIES

Another difficulty has come in through the development of an ignorant conception of the extent and value of psychic powers possessed by particular individuals, and this has often resulted in perfectly blind acceptance of authority, even though that was never in the least intended or desired. Thus, for example, a person would write: "Dear and respected sir, or madam, I am in great need of help. I need not tell you what is the matter, because you will know everything as soon as you get this letter." When this idea prevails in a Lodge, there is an end to thinking, except in the way of trying to understand the information given by the person concerned.

Neither Dr. Besant nor Bishop Leadbeater has countenanced such absurd exaggeration of their use of psychic faculties, but it is nevertheless very widely spread, and it keeps away those who wish to use reason as the basis of their faith. Not a little of the present exodus is due to the fact that many people had placed unreasoning confidence in these two great persons, and having found what they think to be a mistake or two they now fly to the other extreme of doubting everything, equally

unreasonably. If the atmosphere of our Lodges had been different, these people would probably not have gone so far in their misconceptions.

One of our friends has put the situation in this regard very well by saying: "There is no crisis in the Society, but there is a crisis in the mind of almost every member." Some have come to me with the question: "What can we believe now?" I have replied: "There is no question of belief. Theosophy must stand on a rational basis in every individual mind." They respond: "But we must put our confidence in someone who knows more than we do, or else why not drop the whole thing?" I can only reply: "No. A man must live according to his convictions, after studying all opinions and deciding without fear. The rest will follow." The fact is that the time has come when the Society must stand on a rational basis, or else consolidate itself into a comparatively small sect and cult. These are the two possibilities, and we shall have no peace until we choose one or the other, without any compromise. If the latter is chosen, it may be good as sects go, but I for one shall not be in it.

Still another difficulty and cause of future danger to the Society is the idea that it has no need to exist, because Truth cannot be organized. Fortunately our Society does not exist to promulgate a Truth, but only to maintain a point of view which requires a perfectly free search for Truth. In

practice, one finds few people who do not understand this fact. Therefore this difficulty is not great.

A PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

Let us now consider how we may best provide for the usefulness of the Society. If the future is to proceed in the present manner, there will be very little of it left in another two or three years.

Our large loss of members, surprising to relate, accompanies a great increase in public interest in what we have been accustomed to call Theosophical ideas. Reports come from many countries to the effect that the popular press and the magazines contain frequent reference in quite a favourable vein to reincarnation, karma and nirvana. Putting this in another way, the columns of almost all papers are open to any of us who can write in the style appropriate to those papers, provided that we approach our subject impartially and address our readers as man to man. This has been amply proved in Australia, where I had the good fortune to be the originator of what is called the "Advance Australia News Service". A budget of paragraphs is sent out every week to the editors of many papers, touching on all topical subjects in a Theosophical spirit, and the known result of this at the present time is the appearance of 110 columns a month. There must also be some results unknown to us. Fortunately in that country we have a man,

Mr. J. L. Davidge, who has the genius as well as the heart for this kind of work. If we could find such a man in India at the present time, I would beg my friends to start a similar system at once. Summing up this matter, if our material does not appear widely in the press to-day, it is not the fault of the press, but the deficiency of ourselves.

This implies that the state of the public mind is very different to-day from what it was in the time of Madame Blavatsky. It will be remembered by readers of our older Theosophical literature that the purpose of our Movement was to create a place where, as one of the Masters put it, the white dove of truth may plant its weary unwelcome foot. It was at that time pointed out that the world had divided itself into two parties, one accepting blindly the superficial dogmas of orthodox religion, the other almost equally blindly accepting a superficially materialistic science, which was so sure of its shallow ground that any scientific man who dared freely to investigate and express a favourable opinion upon psychic matters a little beyond its commonly accepted scope, was at once set upon and denounced as either senile or dishonest.

Such was the atmosphere in which Madame Blavatsky had to work. In the beginning, as all readers know, she tried to introduce her ideas among the spiritualists, at first as to the power of thought in the moulding of forms, with the intention, no doubt, of afterwards bringing in those deeper

ideas which she later expressed regarding the life which is the foundation of all forms. Had the spiritualists opened their arms to these ideas there would have been no Theosophical Society, and no need for it. But as it was, there was nothing for it but to start a new society, and a little later a new magazine, in which the Theosophical outlook could be discussed and voiced.

In course of time Colonel Olcott organized the Society on its present lines, and innumerable helpers, often with the greatest self-sacrifice, have set up their little societies, which we call Lodges or Branches, in about 1,200 towns, scattered all over the world. For many years these Lodges stood like fortresses in their respective centres. In them people could gather and discuss in a spirit of perfect free thought ideas which would have been scouted without consideration in religious and scientific circles. But during the last twenty years the world has very much changed; the fortresses are no longer needed as fortresses, though they may be quite excellent as clubs. Yet, notwithstanding this change in the world, in which there is now a great seriously-minded and open-minded reading public which scarcely existed twenty years ago, our Society still follows the method of recruitment and retention of members chiefly through these local Lodges, which provide a very limited means.

I am convinced that the future progress of the Society depends upon a recruitment and a retention

of members through some agency other than the Lodges (though those Lodges may very well go on doing whatever they are now able to do), and also upon the development of an atmosphere of free thought in Theosophical matters which is not found to-day in all Lodges.

We have also to admit that the manners and customs, as well as the standard of culture and education, of a particular Lodge have very much to do with the attraction or repulsion of prospective members of the Society, even though it may have very little to do with their acceptance or rejection of general Theosophical truths. In this connection, I may perhaps be pardoned if I give a personal experience of my own, when I came into the Society nearly thirty years ago, because it is a typical experience. I had been with my father to hear two of Mrs. Besant's lectures. We were greatly impressed by her convictions and claims, so we went to an enquirers' meeting which, it was announced, would take place one evening at the local Lodge premises. Along with perhaps twenty other enquirers, we put some questions, which were not satisfactorily answered. However, we went again the next week, and heard a gentleman giving a paper on some subject, which was once more disappointing and unsatisfactory. When I proposed to my father to go for a third time, he objected. Being the head of a large Manchester warehouse, and therefore a busy man, he protested

that he really could not be expected to spend his precious leisure hours in that manner, though he would be very glad to read anything which went to the point. The next time, therefore, I went alone, with the sole object of seeing if I might borrow one or two books from the library which I had noticed there before. I had obtained these from the librarian and was about to depart when two very kind ladies came up to me, and persuaded me to stay for another meeting. They seated me very comfortably, and brought out a collection of photographs—"This is Mr. Mead; this is Mr. Leadbeater; this is Mr. Keightley" and so on—to all of which I nodded politely, though I was mightily hungry for some truth that would touch the problems of my own life and that of the poor factory workers and clerks who surrounded us by the hundreds of thousands. However, delightful personal contacts established, and the books proving quite satisfactory, I soon became a member of the Lodge, and then successively its Librarian, Vice-President and President. That was the Manchester City Lodge, one of the biggest Lodges in the European Section at that time.

Through the years in which I was there our Lodge had many enquirers, and made a number of members. Though we attracted some people, I am sure that we also repelled a great many, who were not quite adapted to us personally. Such is the case with most Lodges. They make members out of

some enquirers; they also make confirmed non-members out of others, and on the whole, as regards the progress of membership, they are far from satisfactory. I remember one President of a Lodge who radiated brotherhood from morning till night. The Lodge had a nice building of its own in the centre of a very large town, but it had only about ten members. That gentleman used to tell me that he thought that there was something wrong with his city, for the people would not keep on coming to the Theosophical Lodge even when they had shown some interest. There was nothing wrong with the city. Our persevering and devoted brother simply talked too much, and drove everybody away. He could not even pause between one sentence and the next to take breath in an ordinary way, but used to suck the air in through his mouth with a whistling sound, so as to lose no time!

The Lodge system has also proved itself unable to cover the ground. For example, travelling through the well populated country between New York and Chicago on one of the main railway lines, I found only three Lodges on the way, in a distance of nearly nine hundred miles. We must devise some system of reaching people in those other towns.

It may surprise some to hear that Lodges are also an extremely expensive mode of propaganda. I cannot hope to give you any satisfactory figures to show how much each member costs, because

Lodges differ so much, but on the whole I think ten pounds per head would be a low figure. Let me put in contrast with that another method of manufacturing Theosophists which was tried by one of our American brothers; the results having been published in *The Theosophical Messenger* about two years ago. His new Theosophists cost him three dollars and seventy-eight cents per head. He selected from among friends or acquaintances some men and women of fair intelligence, and then did not bombard them with propaganda leaflets or vocal effusions, but simply subscribed for *The Theosophist* in their names. In six years he sent the magazine to eleven persons. With what result? Eight of them joined the Society and are working for it. Why not all eleven? Well, of the remaining three one died, one married a Hindu, and one started an occult movement of his own. In some few of these cases a third yearly subscription was necessary before they actually became members. This gentleman also found, by carefully tracing the matter out, that his eight members have since brought in thirteen more. He has shown us the way for mass production of members of the Theosophical Society, of the kind who prove themselves good members, probably because they do some solid reading before joining up, instead of, as often happens in Lodges, becoming members for the sake of personal society, and afterwards "growing into Theosophy," as the expression goes.

At this point I desire most emphatically to say that I do not want to destroy the Lodge system which we now have. Here and there I find people opposed to the new system of organization which I am proposing, on the ground that it wants to discourage the Lodges. Absolutely not. How many lovable people have I not met in the thirty countries which I have visited for Theosophical purposes—people I shall remember with affection for the rest of my life, and whom I regard as the salt of the earth for their good intentions, though not always for their skill in carrying them out!

Now, I want to put before you a method which I am sure would lead to great progress in membership and usefulness for our Society. First, we must have membership conveniently arranged for the reading public, who are not the same people as the lecture-going public. The first requirement for this is that our official magazine, *The Theosophist*, shall be conducted for the promotion of the Theosophical outlook, without partiality for any particular ideas. This, along with a statement of our Objects, should be made clear on the title page. I think there should be no editorial notes, for then every writer could freely advocate his views, without committing the Society to them in any degree. The President, if also Editor, would then be just as free as anybody else to advocate his or her personal views in article form or in a column of personally signed notes in the magazine.

Then, there should be a blank form in the supplementary pages, with the three Objects printed at the top, and beneath them: "I, so-and-so, am entirely in sympathy with the above Objects, and desire to take part in their promotion. Therefore I request you to enrol me as an associate member of the Theosophical Society from such a date to such a date, for which I send my subscription to the official magazine of the Society, and one shilling in addition for registration and other expenses." Needless to say, the profit on the magazine, if any, should go to the Theosophical Society. With double its present circulation it would begin to show a profit.

Some of my friends have told me that our magazine is not good enough for this purpose. If so, I can imagine no greater arraignment of the present President of the Society than this suggestion of neglect of the magazine which represents us before the world; if what is said is true, the Theosophical Society is ruined at its very centre, and we might almost as well give it up at once. Probably, however, it is a difference of opinion as regards editorial policy which dictates this objection in most cases, and I do think that if the paper had *no* editorial policy, but were a real free thought magazine on Theosophical lines, that objection would fall to the ground. When I say free thought, I mean also that those who wish to do so are also free to advocate bound thought or belief. In any case,

the magazine is sure to improve as it obtains more subscribers.

A magazine subscribed for in this way, by persons who feel that it is their own, that it is the magazine of the Society whose Objects they are trying to promote, would be a splendid propaganda agent, for it would be left lying on drawing-room tables, and also lent casually to friends. It would not have the offensiveness of propaganda by leaflets, which approach their prospect with the suggestion that we are the teachers and he is the taught. Then, I think, so far from this method destroying our little Theosophical Clubs, called Lodges, it would rather tend to strengthen them, because people drawn in through the magazine would in many cases be glad to meet other members of their Society. I admit that for the present this system may be useful only in English-speaking countries. Other National Societies could start it in their own languages in course of time, but in the meantime they would carry on their work just as they do at present.

The second part of my scheme is that there should be periodical Conventions in different places, somewhat on the lines of the great gatherings of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. We should get our most capable specialists to prepare a year in advance a lecture or a series in their own special subjects, and we should provide a variety of subjects, and several going on in different

rooms or tents at the same time, so that there may be a choice of occupation for the members who attend. And we must pay the expenses of these lecturers, chosen the year before. It would be announced in the magazine, long in advance, that such a gathering will take place, open to all members, and to others upon payment of a fee. Some small convention charge would also be made to all, to cover expenses. I am sure that many people would like to go to such a gathering, who do not want to attend a Lodge throughout the year. And I believe this could grow into a very striking public feature in the course of time, always provided that there is a free broad platform, and at the same time the most decided pronouncement of individual views. There may be various teachers, if you like, and followings, and even schools of Yoga, but no commitment of the Society to any particular one of these.

There is another great advantage to be derived from the class of membership which I am now advocating. At present, a member who becomes tired of his Lodge, and leaves it, usually permits his membership of the Society also to lapse. We have lost many thousands of members in this way. But people who obtain the magazine regularly to read in their own homes are not so likely to drop out.

I should like to deal very briefly with two objections which have been raised to this scheme. The

first is that some people may join the Society in this manner who would otherwise have become Lodge members, and thus their financial assistance to the Lodges will have been lost. To this I can only say that it would be a very paradoxical sort of practical Theosophy to try to force people into Lodge membership by making any other form of membership more difficult for them, or even unobtainable, as has sometimes been suggested. Surely we do not want to bring pressure to bear upon any Theosophist to support a Lodge in which he is not interested.

The second objection is that our membership might become rather loose; we should not have any sort of control over this new class of members; we should not be able to shepherd them in the way they should go. The answer to that is that the truth can take care of itself. All that we need is a means for putting it forward, and the Society is really only a business and social machine to give truth an opportunity to be expressed. The Society exists to serve all persons who are seeking light, and we need not fear that any one of them who is earnest and sincere will miss the way for want of being personally guided by any of us. The Theosophic life is an individual life—"the spiritual life for the man in the world," as our President expressed it in a great lecture some twenty-three years ago. The numbers of persons who are prepared to accept the Theosophical outlook simply

for practical use in their daily life has greatly increased in the last few years, and it is principally for the benefit of those people that our Society exists.

FOURTH LECTURE

THE FUTURE OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

BY BABU HIRENDRANATH DATTA, M.A., LL.B.

INTRODUCTORY

FRIENDS:

I am deeply sensible of the honour of being invited by our President to deliver one of the Convention Lectures this year on the general subject of "The Future of the Theosophical Society". In so inviting me, the President said that she wanted each lecturer to give his own individual opinion, quite independently. This, I need hardly remind you, was in accordance with the established tradition of our Society, in which the bond of union among the members is not the profession of a common belief but a common search and aspiration for Truth. Indeed, month after month, through its official organ, the Society proclaims to the world that there is no doctrine, no opinion, by

whomsoever taught or held, that is binding on any member, none which any member is not free to accept or reject, and that no teacher nor writer, from H. P. Blavatsky downwards, has any authority to impose his teachings or opinions on members. The Society, moreover, earnestly requests every member, fearlessly to exercise his own right of liberty of thought and of expression thereof—of course, within the limits of courtesy and consideration for others. So far, it was all right. But then the President concluded her letter to me with these words: "Your opinion as an old, well-read and well-informed member would be particularly helpful and instructive." Undoubtedly, I am an old member, having been admitted by Colonel Olcott in 1893, the same year as our President first set foot on Indian soil, in her present incarnation. Having been so admitted, I have now lived as a Theosophist for the best part of my life. I only trust that some fine morning, the Theosophical powers-that-be may not issue a fiat dissolving the Theosophical Society and thus take away my hope of dying a Theosophist. When, however, the President spoke of my being well-read and well-informed and my opinion proving helpful and instructive, I am afraid, her affection for her ancient pupil, (I have been Dr. Besant's pupil now for over 85 years), somewhat warped her judgment, making her (she will pardon my saying so) rather partial. Partiality, we all know, is the "last infirmity of

noble minds," and only one who has finally unified his consciousness with Brahman is able to shed this fetter. So it is said in the Upanishad :

*Paksapata-vinirmuktam Brahma Sampadyate
Tada.*

Brothers, I believe I am not imposing on your credulity when I ask you to accept that I am an old man. You have ocular demonstration of that fact. So there is no need to take this on my authority. As you know, old men are disposed to be garrulous and those on the wrong side of sixty, as I am, are apt to be rather conservative in their views. Of course, I am not thinking of our President at all. She is not old. She, like the rosy *Usas*, hymned by the Vedic bards, is at once *tabysi* and *navyasi*, simultaneously ancient and modern, and, more than any other individual I know of, realizes in her person Swedenborg's idea of an angel, in which order of creation, the older an angel grows the nearer is his approach to youth.

In my case, moreover, the natural conservatism of old age is strengthened by a long course of training in and practice of the law. Lawyers have to hunt up and make the most of precedents, and this inevitably develops what I may call the "precedent complex" in them. You will find, before I finish, how the aforesaid limitations colour my thinking. All this is by way of preface. Let me now embark on my subject.

FIRST SECTION

THE CRISIS IN THE T.S.

Mr. A. P. Warrington, the Vice-President of our Society, in a recent issue of *The Theosophist*, began an article with the following words, to which I draw your pointed attention: "It does not require a very extended observation to enable one to perceive that the Theosophical Society at this time is beset with evidences of a crisis quite as serious as any it has ever had." (The more discerning among our members began to sense the signs of the coming crisis about two years ago, but now it is patent to all.) Mr. Warrington proceeds: "At present even old and devoted memberships are being cancelled and newly placed enthusiasms are being aroused. Those who are less wise have entered into their change of attitude with a fanatical zeal, so one-pointed as to cause them to feel that every attitude, thought or opinion that does not harmonize with their new one, is wrong, unnatural and even an affront to their newly chosen leader. They are turning their backs upon things they once regarded as sacred, and in some cases even with feelings of antagonism and resentment against people who gave them generous assistance in the past." These words of our Vice-President, admirably delineate the present situation in the Society. All of us may not be disposed to

accept his discrimination between the wise and the other-wise or rather the less wise among our members. But when he next proceeds to say that "naturally this state of affairs has aroused in the more stable members of the Society, feelings of amazement and *even of alarm* for the future welfare of the Movement which has meant so much for them," I fully endorse his views—but with one reservation as regards the alleged *alarm*. Kalidasa, "who saw life steadily and saw it whole," said 1,500 years ago that it is in the nature of love to feel alarmed about the beloved *Sineha Paba-shanki*. That is why we often needlessly worry ourselves by imagining all manner of future disaster for our near and dear ones. No wonder, therefore, that many of our members, possessing deep devotion to the Theosophical Society—members to whom the Society stands as "the most spiritual undertaking in the world to-day" and for whom Theosophy connotes "the widest and deepest aspirations of the human race"—should feel alarm and anxiously discuss the future of the Theosophical Society. Speaking for myself, and having carefully examined my heart, I say that I feel no sort of alarm. In my humble way, I greatly love the Society, to which I owe all the best I have been able to do in this life—which has clarified my vision, enlarged my outlook, illumined my darkest problems, and given me ideals and enthusiasms to live by and die for. So, the Theosophical Society has meant

and does mean a very great deal to me. Yet, with my best efforts, I have been unable to work up enough anxiety to feel *alarmed* about the future of the Theosophical Society.

THE T.S. AND THE MASTERS

You will naturally ask "why?" Well, for a very simple but sufficient reason. From the available evidence, which I have carefully sifted, I am convinced that the Theosophical Society, unlike, say the Royal Geographical Society or the Asiatic Society of Bengal, is not a mere human institution. It was founded under the direct orders of the "Masters," those "just men made perfect," whom in this country we call "Rishis," and it has all along been helped, guided and inspired by Them.¹

¹ When H. P. B. started the Theosophical Society, she did so only at Their bidding, as she stated again and again (*The Golden Book of the T.S.*, p. 2). She went to the United States upon the order of her Master (*The Personality of H. P. B.*, by C. Jinarajadasa). See also H. P. B.'s own words quoted there:

"M. brings orders to form a Society—a secret Society like the Rosicrucian Lodge. He promises to help."

Read also the following words of the Master M. in the *Mahatma Letters*: "In casting about, we found in America the man to stand as leader—a man of great moral courage, unselfish, and having other good qualities. He was far from being the best but he was the best one available. With him, we associated a woman of most exceptional and wonderful endowments. Combined with them, she had strong personal defects: but just as she was, there was no second to her living, fit for this work. We sent her to America, brought them together—and the trial began."

The T. S. being thus the Masters' Society, my idea is that do what you and I may or can or omit to do, it *cannot* die. Even if we were to consign it to the funeral pyre, the T. S. will rise from it renovated, in a more radiant form, in *Navataram Kalyanataram Rupam*. For have we not the gracious assurance of one of the Masters that "so long as there are three men worthy of our Lord's blessings in the Theosophical Society, it can never be destroyed"? and we have, I make bold to say, scores, if not hundreds, of such men and women in the Theosophical Society.

I have, therefore, always regarded it to be a high privilege for anyone to be associated with the work and activities of the T. S. and to co-operate for the fulfilment of its great plan. But suppose our members as a body decide to withhold co-operation, and in their unwisdom prove recalcitrant, even then the Masters will not be baulked of Their purpose. What Bernard Shaw has finely said of humanity in the gross, will then happen to our members. "The Power which produced Man, when the monkey was not up to the mark, can produce a higher creature than Man, if Man does not come up to the mark . . . If Man will not serve, Nature will try another experiment, superseding Man by a new form of life, better adapted for her purpose, as Man himself has superseded the ape and the elephant, and he shall go the way of the mastodon and the megatherium and the other

scrapped experiments." But all the indications are that such a contingency will not arise—at least in the near future—and that there will really be no occasion for the Masters to throw the Theosophical Society on to the scrap-heap.

H. P. BLAVATSKY

In saying this, I am not heedless of that vocal body of opinion in the Society, which thinks that "the T. S. must conquer duality and cease to be a philosophy of the Beyond" (whatever that may mean exactly), and that "either the T. S. must *perish* or she must conquer the conflict in herself and start with fresh aims and methods" because the movement, we are told, has already become a back number and belongs to the past rather than to the future. Our friend Dr. J. J. van der Leeuw may fairly be taken to represent this type of opinion in the Society, but I doubt whether he will consent to be placed in that class which, in the words of Professor Wodehouse, is made up of many "pairs of erstwhile loyal shoulders which are nowadays being shrugged in disillusionment," by reason of the supposed failure of our leaders in that wisdom, intuition, spiritual insight and true perception that were asked of them.

I find that Dr. van der Leeuw's discontent is more fundamental and he is of opinion that "all

the element of revelation in Theosophy with all its attendant evils dates from the time of H. P. B. and finds its origin in her". I freely admit that being a human organization and working through human agencies, the Society has sometimes made mistakes. But, on the whole, it has remarkably well served the purpose for which it was designed. I also admit that H. P. B. in common with our other leaders, not being a *Jivanmukta*, committed a few blunders. I am by no means a "Back-to-Blavatsky"-walla. But I wholly dissent from this sweeping judgment of Dr. van der Leeuw on Madame Blavatsky. For my part, I regard her as a messenger from the Great White Lodge—the *Rishi-Sangha* of the Upanishads. She was "the centre of a strange occult world, continually seeing, hearing and sensing the Masters," and devoting herself with dauntless courage, infinite patience and untiring zeal to carry out Their plan for the upliftment of humanity. In fact (I am quoting Mr. Jinarajadasa) "in her own mind, the sole value to the world of herself and of her work was that she was an agent of the Masters". She, we know, regarded herself as a servant of the Great Ones, specially of her own Guru. Let me quote her own words: "My Master the sole creator of my inner-self . . . He knows that I am but a slave and that *he* has the right to order me about, without consulting my taste or desire."

She was, as Mr. Jinarajadasa has also reminded us, quoting the language of the Master Serapis, "a pure chaste soul, a very pearl inside an outwardly coarse nature, possessing the dazzling divine light concealed under such a bark," and endowed with a psychic organization of such wonderful delicacy that it could be made use of as a fulcrum to send out the Masters' influence wherever she happened to be. Moreover, it was her heart's blood which cemented the mighty edifice which we know as the Theosophical Society. I, therefore, take this opportunity of paying my humble tribute to her glorious memory.

When Dr. van der Leeuw enjoins us never to let the free waters of life become stagnant, or reminds us that "there is no back-door to the sanctuary of our own Soul," and discarding what he calls "revelation" insists on "realization," one feels inclined to quote to him the well-worn saying that religion *is* realization and to remind him that month by month, for years past, our members have been reading in *The Theosophist* and other T.S. journals the following words: "Truth should be sought by study, by reflection, by purity of life, by devotion to high ideals and be regarded as a prize to be striven for, not as a dogma to be imposed by authority and that belief should be the result of individual study or intuition and not its antecedent and should rest on knowledge, not on assertion." So all this should have by now become a truism with our members.

IS THE T.S. AN ANACHRONISM?

Friends, in your journey through life, you must have encountered individuals, as I have (their number is rather restricted) who, while not endorsing the extreme views of the Van der Leeuw school, have somehow convinced themselves that the Theosophical Society has outlived its usefulness. These good friends are generous enough to allow that the Society did glorious work in the past by stemming the rising tide of materialism, by fighting the ugly monster of superstition drawing sustenance from an empty ceremonialism in the hands of a hide-bound priesthood who stifled the life of true religion, and by shedding illuminating light on the obscurer problems of religion, of philosophy and of science. But the T.S. has had its day, and now like a player whose part is finished it is needlessly loitering on the stage. Therefore: *Nirvana Dipe Kimu Tailadanam*—why waste oil over extinguished lamp?

THE FIRST OBJECT OF THE SOCIETY

But is this view sustained by facts? Let us take in order the three objects that the Theosophical Society has set before itself. Take the first object—to form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour. Has such a nucleus been

established yet, so as to leaven the mass of humanity? True, Brotherhood is now acknowledged to be a fact in Nature. It is also admitted that, being children of the One Father that is in Heaven—*Pitasi Nah*—and being rooted in the One Life, we *are* indeed brothers. True, poets have sung and dreamers have dreamed dreams about the Federation of the World and the Parliament of Man. But still, the Theosophical Society remains yet the *only* Society that has made Brotherhood the sole basis of membership and welcomes to its ranks all who believe in that exalted ideal. True, also, that the social conscience has awakened in many men and women, who voluntarily engage in welfare work and social service and maintain asylums, refuges and Panchama schools. Yet is all this more than mere tinkering? Dive deeper, and you will soon discover that the majority of the ills from which the human race has been suffering are due to lack of true Brotherhood. Take the problem of Untouchability in India and the problem of the Negro in America. True, the lynching and burning of Negroes is being denounced from pious pulpits in the States, and here in India Gandhiji has raised his powerful voice against the evil of Untouchability. But the problems still evade solution and not until we apply the solvent of Brotherhood, will their stubbornness yield to our efforts, however well meant.

What is that solvent? To regard with an equal eye the Brahmana and the Pariah, the white, the

yellow, the brown and the black, and to discover the concealed Divinity in every creature, realizing the truth of the ancient proclamation : *Brahma Dashah, Brahma Kitabah*—"Brahman is in the slave, Brahman is in the sinner." As says the *Gita* : "The true cosmopolitan, seeing the *Atman* in all beings and all beings in the *Atman*, regards all with an equal eye."¹

That is the Theosophical ideal. As our President has truly said : "To follow Theosophical ideals is to become profoundly humanitarian and international, and to be pledged never to cease from improving social conditions all the world over. To be a son of God is to be a servant of Man. The work of the Theosophical Society must always develop to meet human needs. Theosophists must throw themselves into every kind of activity, until there is no corner of the earth, where God's will is not done, as it is done in the higher world."

That is why, mainly under her inspiration, various Leagues and Orders of Service have been established, where service is looked at from a new angle of vision. True service, we may be sure, is not the grudging, stooping condescension of the high and lofty for the lowly and the suppressed but is gladsome *seva* (service) rendered, in order to release the possibilities of self-revelation of the

¹ सर्वभूतस्थमात्मानं सर्वभूतानि चात्मनि ।

ईक्षते योगयुक्तात्मा सर्वत्र समदर्शनः ॥

imprisoned Divine Life in our younger brothers. So the *Bhagavata* says: "Salute in a reverent spirit all these creatures with respect in your heart, for the Most High dwelleth in each one of them."¹

In this country, when we speak of brothers, we inevitably think of the joint family—the ideal commune of ancient India, where there is no drab equality but a soulful fraternity of elder and younger. And only when we have succeeded in establishing on our earth a gigantic joint family, composed of brothers-in-the-spirit, where each gives freely according to his capacity and each is given ungrudgingly according to his needs, (as is the case in every true joint family), it will only be then and not until then that the social problem will have reached a solution.

And what about the political problem? Man is not only a social but a political animal. What do we find in the arena of politics? We find that groups of individuals organized into States are given to parochial patriotism and setting Nationalism as their goal as opposed to Internationalism, are engaged in domination and exploitation of the weaker by the stronger States, thus sinning grievously against Brotherhood. Inevitably, nations

¹ मनसैतानि भूतानि प्रणमेद्ब्रह्मानयन् ।

ईश्वरो जीवकल्या प्रविष्टो भगवान् इति ॥

are warring against nations and are piling up armaments and manufacturing poison gases of sorts, in preparation for the next world-war of extermination. Where they enter into peace pacts, they do so with mental reservations and hedge such pacts with provisos. When they establish a League of Nations it is not a League of Humanity but a League of "White Man-ity". In India itself, where with the Vedantic tradition we ought to have known better, many scout the idea of a United Commonwealth and talk of self-contained independence, preferring the ideal of isolation to that of integration. Here Theosophy steps in, with *its* ideal of the Federation of Free and Self-determined States—a real United States, not of America, Europe or Asia but a United States of the whole world—wherein the constituent States, each keeping its individuality intact and developing along its own lines for the attainment of full self-realization, will be united together in an all-embracing Unity and will serve as units in a world-organism, as a true *Vyasti* (Unit) in a comprehensive *Samasti* (Unity).

What is the spiritual basis of this ideal, what its philosophical justification? It is in accord with what Sir Ray Lankester calls "Nature's predestined plan". What is that plan? To create, at all levels, higher and higher and more and more complex organisms or *Sanghātas*, in which the individual Units, each with a distinct life and purpose of its own, are not merely juxtaposed but are linked

together in a vital organic Unity to subserve the purpose of the whole; until ultimately is reached the *Viswa-rupa* of the Vedanta—"an organism great enough to express the Unity of the Divine Life (immanent in the world) and complex enough to give play to all Its infinite multiplicity of manifestation". On this let me quote the thoughtful words of a Theosophical writer: "The Divine Life in nature being One, is to be thought of as ever striving to return to Its primal Unity. But being, as it were, broken up and distributed into the Many, It can, while manifestation lasts, only realize this Unity by combining the Many into One, in such a way that the 'Unity' does not destroy the 'Multiplicity'. In other words, Its return to Itself must be, not by fusion (which would abolish the Many) but by organization (in which the Many are gathered up into a vital Unity, while preserving their Manyness)." Translate all this into terms of the State and we arrive at the ideal of Federation of the World.

I am inclined to think that our distinguished countryman, Deshbandhu C. R. Das, had this Theosophic ideal in his mind when in his now famous Faridpore speech he uttered these memorable words: "No nation can live in isolation. Dominion Status, while it affords complete protection to each constituent, composing the great Commonwealth of Nations, called the British Empire, secures to each the right to realize itself,

develop itself and fulfil itself. Therefore it expresses all the elements of Swaraj . . . To me the idea is specially attractive, because of its deep spiritual significance. I believe in World Peace, in the ultimate Federation of the World. The great Commonwealth of Nations, called the British Empire, a federation of divers races, each with its distinct life, distinct civilization, its distinct mental outlook, if properly led, is bound to make a lasting contribution to the great problem that awaits statesmen, the problem of knitting the world into the Greatest Federation the mind can conceive, the Federation of the human race. Independence to my mind is a narrower ideal than Swaraj." Deshbandhu was a poet and a Vaishnava before he came into politics. Little wonder, therefore, that the spiritual ideal of "integration" should have touched a responsive chord in his soul.

THE SECOND OBJECT OF THE SOCIETY

Let us next turn to the second object of our Society—"to encourage the study of comparative religion, philosophy and science". All these years we have welcomed "every one willing to study, to be tolerant, to aim high and to work perseveringly, as a member". At Adyar, in the spacious compound of the T. S., we have given harbourage to temples of all the World-Faiths, so that a Hindu shrine, a Parsi fire-altar, a Buddhist pagoda, a

Jewish synagogue, a Christian church and a Muhammadan mosque may stand side by side in fraternal concord. At the Jubilee Convention, we instituted the system of "Prayers of all Religions," to be recited each in its own sacred tongue by one of its followers, so that their unified benedictions may soften religious acerbities. Nay, more. Our President has compiled a *Universal Textbook of All Religions*, reverentially giving each an equal place and shewing how in all essentials they speak with a common voice; so that bigots and zealots might appreciate (I am quoting Professor Vaswani) that "the Hindu Rishis are not in conflict with Mahavira and Buddha, Jesus does not contradict Krishna, Muhammad has no quarrel with Zoroaster. There is no antagonism but a beautiful harmony between Guru Nanak and Saint Francis. Religions are not rivals. Religions are sisters in the one family of the Spirit". In one word, "the many faiths are all one holy church". Thus the Theosophical Society, ever since its foundation, has been teaching the much-needed lesson of a wide and noble tolerance, has been inculcating in its members a spirit of broad-minded appreciation of each other's faiths—not merely wryfaced sufferance or even grudging toleration but gladsome welcome and hearty acquiescence. But have we yet succeeded in exorcising the spirit of religious snobbery and in impressing on the public mind that all religions are but variant forms of the one Divine

Wisdom and so realized our ideal of a "Fraternity of Faiths"? If not, there is yet much work in front of the Theosophical Society. May I in this connection bring to your notice two incidents within my personal knowledge?

A true-believing Roman Catholic—he was teacher at an educational institution in Calcutta—once said to a Hindu friend: "You Hindus are bad enough but the Protestants? They are . . .—are unspeakable!" About three years ago, a few friends started a Fellowship Movement in Calcutta, where the followers of the different faiths were to meet on terms of perfect equality. We began rather well and were gathering in broad-minded Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, Christians and Muhammadans. Presently a rift appeared in our lute. Some of our best members felt compelled to withdraw, by reason of pressure from their religious superiors. What an object lesson to the apathetic and the indifferent in matters religious! For goodness' sake let us cease our mutual bickerings and quarrellings. What right, I ask as a Theosophist, has anyone to look upon his religion as the only true one? How is my particular "ism" the only "ism"? Were not we taught centuries ago that as the breaths in the nostril of man, so numerous are the ways of approach to God? Did not Ramakrishna Paramahansa in our own day teach that each individual has his own particular approach to God, echoing in this the age-old proclamation of the *Gita*: "Though men approach God

in divers ways, yet all attain unto Him" and confirming the teaching of the Christ: "In my Father's house there are many mansions"? Why then should anybody be what the *Gita* stigmatizes as *Nayadasti-Vadi*—"Only this way, none other, none other". This haughty self-righteousness has, I make bold to say, done more harm to the cause of religion than any other single thing. If the Christian should regard the Hindu as heathen, and the Moslem should regard the Christian as *Kafer* (infidel) and the Hindu should retort by calling them both *Mlechcha* (barbarian) and each one should try to pick holes in the religious armour of the other, as he usually does—why should not the indifferent bystander say with Mercutio in "Romeo and Juliet": "A plague on both your houses," and turn a cold shoulder to all religions, impartially, with a supreme gesture of indifference?

That brings me to the special Hindu-Moslem problem in India which is blocking all progress. In this City of Benares, a few centuries ago, the mystic weaver Kabir sang: "The Hindu calls on his Rama, the Moslem on his Rahim, and then fight each other, not knowing the inner truth."¹ Where do you think this outstanding Hindu-Moslem problem will be solved? Not by any means at the oval table at St. James's, by each Community insisting on its

¹ हिन्दु कहत है राम हमारा मुसलमान रहिमाना ।

आपसमे दौ लड़े मरते है, मरम कोई न जाना ॥

particular interests but in that temple of tolerance we speak of as the Theosophical Society.

But not merely comparative religion, we encourage also the study of philosophy and science. The conflict between religion and science, specially in the West, is a familiar fact and has been dilated on by many writers of eminence. True, religion is nowadays less dogmatic and science a bit less intolerant than it used to be. But what we call *Bijnana* and *Prajnana*—head-learning and soul-wisdom—are still awaiting reconciliation. And philosophy is still, one regrets to say, in most cases, a mere exercise of intellectual ingenuity and continues to justify Milton's characterization of it as "vain". It

"Uncertain and unsettled still remains
Crude or intoxicate, collecting toys
And trifles for choice matters worth a sponge,
As children gathering pebbles on the shore."
—*Paradise Regained. Book IV.*

Therefore we require the synthetic touch of Theosophy which Madame Blavatsky rightly characterized as the synthesis of Religion, Philosophy and Science.

THE THIRD OBJECT OF THE SOCIETY

And what about the third object of the Society, *viz.*, to investigate the unexplained laws of Nature and the powers latent in man? In 1909, our President, in a remarkable series of lectures under the general

caption of "The Changing World," drew attention to the deadlock arising in science, and pointed out how with the rapidly approaching limit of refinement of physical apparatus, present-day science had approached the borderland, where the orthodox method of "observation, experiment and inference" was proving inadequate and had begun to feel the need of a new instrument of research. This, if my recollection serves me right, was confirmed shortly afterward by the declaration of a great scientist that the word "failure" was writ large on all efforts of modern science during the preceding 70 years. I need not dilate on this topic, specially in view of Mr. Geoffrey Hodson's book on *The Science of Seership* where the author claims (and is able to sustain his claim) that unsuspected powers of cognition lie latent in every mind, which may be developed by appropriate means and will eventually be developed in all. How these awakened powers—such as clairvoyance, clairaudience, psychometry, etc.—may be employed to add to human knowledge and to elucidate fragments of forgotten history is well illustrated by such works as *Occult Chemistry*, *Man Visible and Invisible*, *Man: Whence, How and Whither*, *The Lives of Aleyone*, etc., and must be well known to students of Theosophical literature. Here Bishop Leadbeater as a trained occultist deservedly holds a high place, and I take this opportunity of placing on record my deep sense of gratitude for his valuable work.

If you do not mind my being personal, I may tell you that I am not a trained scientist and do not take much interest in the abstruse problems of higher science, but I have an insatiate curiosity in the antiquarian field and am deeply interested in Indian antiquities, both historical and linguistic and literary. For instance, I should very much like to come across the *Bharata-Sanhita*, of which the *Mahabharata* is an amplification and the original *Purana-Sanhita* compiled by Vyasa, from which all the eighteen Puranas are derived.¹ I should like to know definitely when the battle of Kurukshetra was fought and specially in what shape the *Gita* was given by Lord Krishna to his disciple Arjuna. I should also like to discover, if I may, the historical background of the Puranic story of the twenty-one wars of extermination waged by Rama of the Axe and of scores of other historical and antiquarian puzzles. I may tell you that I am fairly familiar with the researches of orientalists and antiquarians in this field including those relating to Mahenjo-Daro and Harappa. But these befog me and leave me shivering. I want more light. You may try to quench my curiosity by suggesting that all this is unnecessary and merely wastes my time. But I have my "individual

¹ चातुर्विंशति साहस्रीं चक्रे भारतसंहिताम् ।—महाभारत, आदिपर्व ।

आख्यानैश्चाप्युपाख्यानैर्गाथाभिः कल्पशुद्धिभिः ।

पुराणासंहितां चक्रे पुराणार्थविशारदः ॥—विष्णुपुराणम् ।

uniqueness " as well as you, which refuses to submit to suppression and will not rest content until, by following up the third object of the Society, I secure, for one thing, access in my own right to that wonderful museum in the vast subterranean halls at Kalapa, beyond the Himalayas, of which the Master K. H. is the keeper. Here, we have been told, are stored, *inter alia*, models in alto-relievo showing all the variations of the surface of the earth and of departed animal and vegetable forms (a few only of which are known to us as fossils), and also amazingly life-like statues perpetuating the physical appearances of certain of the great Leaders and Teachers of long forgotten races, and, last but not least, original manuscripts of incredible antiquity and of priceless value.

Explaining the purpose of this third object, our President has said: "That purpose is to substitute idealism for materialism, to substitute science for blind credulity, to substitute knowledge for faith, to substitute mysticism for formalism." Until therefore this substitution has been effected and the deadlocks in science and in the antiquarian and other fields have been removed, how can we regard the task of the Theosophical Society as accomplished?

THE SOCIETY IN VIEW OF THE ADVENT

I am aware that the view I have been criticizing, *viz.*, that the T.S. has become an anachronism in

these latter days, has received reinforcement in some quarters from the advent of the World Teacher in his chosen vehicle. Now that "the desire of all" is here and the winter of our waiting has been made glorious summer by Krishnaji, the sun, what need, it is asked, is there for the continuance of the Theosophical Society? True, it is said, the Theosophical Society did splendid service in acting as the herald of the Lord and in preparing the arena for his appearance; also in protecting, nourishing and training the vessel which was to hold the heavenly nectar. But, having finished the task of preparation in a fairly successful fashion, is not the T.S. now *functus officio* and should it not make a quiet exit and translate itself to a region where it can reap the reward of its good karma? This, I am bound to say, is a very short-sighted view. For, apart from the fact that in the very nature of things, the World Teacher's stay with us cannot but be temporary, whereas the T.S. is designed and destined to last for centuries—I say that if the world is to derive the full benefit of the Lord's coming, it can only be by the active though unofficial co-operation of the Theosophical Society.

There is another important consideration which we must not lose sight of. Those who are diligent students of Krishnaji's books and pamphlets, will, I am sure, endorse the verdict of Professor Wodehouse that his is perhaps one of the richest, the subtlest and in many respects the most *difficult*

bodies of teaching that have been given to the world. When one is in his immediate presence and is bathed in his aura and one's mind, impinged by his personal affluence, his magnetic effusion, is keyed up to a high pitch, it is comparatively easy; but when reading his words in cold print, I doubt whether even the professor in his study or the scientist in his laboratory—not to speak of the man in the street or at the plough—can really understand him. I am not thinking of the elect souls—those who have achieved intuition and have attained "the poise of love and reason". But, as Krishnaji himself has said, his message is not meant for these few only, but for all, and though he is doing his level best to step it down to our humble levels, yet success is and can only be partial. The heavenly *suparna* with sun-glints in its eyes—whose native habitat is the empyrean—can you tether it to the dirt and grime of our earth without its suffering defilement? In the beautiful words of *The Voice of the Silence*: "Heaven's dew-drop glittering in the morn's first sun-beam within the bosom of the lotus, when dropped on earth, becomes a piece of clay; behold the pearl is now a speck of mire." Where, however, one has Theosophy at the background of his mind and is fairly well posted in Theosophical literature, has studied, say, *The Secret Doctrine* and has made himself familiar with the Theosophy of the Upanishads, it is less difficult for such a one to apprehend Krishnaji's meaning than

for one not so endowed. Let me try to illustrate what I mean. Take Krishnaji's wonderful phrase "the poise between Love and Reason," which I have already used. Hamlet, I believe, had some such thing in his mind when he said :

" Bless'd are those

Whose blood and judgment are so well
commingled.

That they are not a pipe for Fortune's finger,
To sound what stop she please."

But when the Prince of Denmark offered to wear one of these blessed ones in his heart's cove—aye in his heart of heart—I doubt very much if he understood the real implication of his description, unless indeed his professors at the Wittenburg University had already taught him, by anticipation, the true significance of what we call "Buddhic Consciousness" in Theosophy.

Take another favourite phrase of Krishnaji's—"individual uniqueness" which, as he tells us in the November *Star Bulletin* is continuous through birth and death, until it achieves, until it has realized, which he says is "the sole guide in your existence as a separate individual until you reach your goal". When Emerson, in the second quarter of the last century, coined this remarkable phrase "individual uniqueness," I hardly think he realized its full connotation, which, we have been told, is nothing less than "the liberation of the Absolute Life by its re-discovery, after long obscuration, of its own

absoluteness in the perfected uniqueness of the particular". I am certain that you will understand all this better if you are familiar with the Theosophical idea of "achieving your own Archetype" and if you will read again *The Idyll of the White Lotus*, specially the following sentence towards the end :

"Life has in it more than the imagination of man can conceive. Seize boldly upon its mystery and demand, in the obscure places of your own soul, light with which to illumine those dim recesses of individuality to which you have been blinded through a thousand existences."

Take Life itself—which Krishnaji teaches—is the goal. What is Life? If you have read your Theosophy to any purpose, you will know that Krishnaji's Life is not the vitalism of the biogenists, between which and the non-living, they say, there is a great gulf fixed; it is not the *elan vital* of Bergson which by "its internal push has carried life by more and more complex forms to higher and higher destinies," which to quote Bergson himself "has something of the psychological order immanent in all things, low as well as high, which feels and strives and achieves"; it is not even the Fohat of *The Secret Doctrine* by whose "finest thread the spark hangs from the Flame" and which is but a mode of its manifestation. But it is the Prana of the Upanishads, that is *Prajnatma Anandah Ajarah Amritah*—"is purposive, is endowed with *Iksha*, blissful, immutable and immortal"—which, in the words of

the *Mahabharata* (III,213-4), compresses in an eternal Now, the past and the present and the future' and which is to be meditated on as the Brahman, as *Pita Twam Matarishwa Nah*—"Oh Prana! Thou art our father"—that principle (there is no better word at hand) which "mightily and sweetly ordereth all things".

Pranasyedam Base Sarvam Tridibe yat prathitam—"All this, that is established in the three worlds is ordered by Prana" the principle which, as we read in *The Idyll of the White Lotus*, gives life, dwells in us and without us and is undying and eternally beneficent; which is in the words of the *Chandogya* (III,13-7)³ "the holy light which shines above this heaven, in the highest worlds, in all the worlds, above all, above every thing, is verily the same Light which shines within every creature".

Therefore, Krishnaji says: "In itself, Life is objectless and subjectless, is creation, being, and may result in manifestation or not—is both the creator and the created, both the subject and the object, both the unmanifested and the manifested." You will, I am afraid, be inclined to exclaim "words, words, words," unless you are familiar with the

¹ भूतं भव्यं भविष्यं च सर्वं प्राणे प्रतिष्ठितम् ।

श्रेष्ठं तद् सर्वभूतानां ब्रह्मयोनिमुपास्महे ॥

² अयं यद् अतः परो दिवो ज्योतिर्दीप्यते, विश्वतः पृष्ठेषु सर्वतः पृष्ठेषु ।

अनुत्तमेषु उत्तमेषु लोकेषु इदं वाय तद् यद् इदम् अस्मिन् अन्तः पुरुषे
ज्योतिः ॥

Vedantic conception (which is the same as the Theosophic—Theosophia being, as we know, the Greek name for Vedanta or Brahma Vidya), of Brahman or the Absolute as the Supreme Unity of all contradictions.¹

“At once static and dynamic, above life and in it, all Love yet all Law, eternal in essence though working in time—this vision resolves the contraries which tease those who study it from without.” (Underhill's *Mysticism*.)

Take another of Krishnaji's difficult lessons—the distinction he draws between Being and Becoming. Freedom, he teaches us, is being: expansion is becoming. Liberation is not expansion of consciousness but freedom of consciousness, which does not involve time or space, because in that there is no multiplication of many “I am's”. And what is consciousness? It is “that selfhood in which all individual consciousnesses exist, which is beyond time and space, although time and space are in that consciousness”. All this is profoundly true, but it will remain somewhat vague unless you have grasped the nettle of *Sambhuti* and *Vinasah* (Being and Becoming) of the *Isha-Upanishad*.² *Sambhutyamritam Ashnute*, that is, in the language

¹ अन्यत्र धर्माद् अन्यत्राधर्माद् अन्यत्रास्मात् कृताकृतात् ।

अन्यत्र भूताच्च भव्याच्च यत्तत् पश्यसि तद्वद ॥

² सम्भूतिं च विनाशं च यस्तद् वेदोभयं सह ।

विनाशेन मृत्युं तीर्त्वा सम्भूत्यामृतं मश्नुते ॥

of Krishnaji, in the realization of one's being, which is the being of all things, alone is happiness or immortality.

I must stop here and not pursue further these fascinating by-paths of metaphysic, especially as I have, I think, said enough to sustain my suggestion that to be well-grounded in Theosophy is a distinct advantage in the understanding of Krishnaji's message. Let me, therefore, go back to the topic of the crisis in the Theosophical Society to which Mr. Warrington has directed attention, and try to indicate certain lines of thought which may throw some light on this subject.

SECOND SECTION

"DARK SAYINGS" OF KRISHNAJI

Since the Jubilee Convention of the Society, when the consciousness of Krishnaji appears to have established definite connection with that of the World Teacher, Krishnaji has given utterance to certain (what in Christian phraseology would be called) "dark sayings," which contradict or at least seem to contradict some of the current ideas and opinions held in the Theosophical Society; and this, more than anything else, is, I think, responsible for the present unrest in the Society. They have undoubtedly had an unsettling effect on some minds and appear to have upset the equanimity of

a certain number of our members. Take, as illustrations, his energetic and insistent call to leave all rites, forms, gods, gurus and mediators, to discard Scriptures and teachings and authority in general, in a word Revelation of every kind, as unacceptable, and to rely on one's own experience and intuition for the realization of Truth, to pursue the "direct path" to the pathless Life and to storm the citadels of the Kingdom of Happiness by one's own unaided efforts. If, however, you will carefully think out Krishnaji's thoughts, does he *really* contradict the teachings of the great Teachers of the past? Verily, he has come to fulfil, not to destroy. All these great Teachers are "Tathhagatos," as the Buddha declared himself to be, and belong to the same tribe. So they should be in agreement with each other. At Calcutta, on his last public visit, a question was put to Krishnaji: "What is the point of departure of your Message from those of previous Teachers?" His frank reply was to the effect: "There is nothing new under the sun. I do not claim that what I am teaching is new. But I teach what I have myself realized."

Very similar was Confucius' declaration, made 2,500 years ago: "I only hand on: I cannot create new things. I believe in the ancients and therefore love them." The Prophet of Islam practically endorsed this when he enjoined on his followers thus: "Say, we believe in God and that which hath been sent down unto us and that which was sent down

unto Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribe and that which was delivered to Moses and Jesus and the Prophets from their Lord ; we make no distinction between any of them." As Krishnaji himself said at a Camp-Fire in August last : " One can only repeat the same thing in a different language, in different words, repeat the same central living reality which defies all description." As regards this central living reality, I should prefer to write " Reality " with a capital R and then say, as Krishnaji has said, that you cannot hold the wind in your fist or put the ocean in a thimble and repeat the phrase of Yajnavalkya : " Abjure then many words, for effort at definition is only tiring of speech." ¹

DISCARD AUTHORITY

Some people have felt disturbed by Krishnaji's injunction to discard " authority ". But can anything be more drastic than the following declaration by the Buddha ?

" Do not believe anything on hearsay ; do not believe traditions because they are old and handed down through many generations ; do not believe anything on account of rumours or because people

नातुध्यायाद् बहुन् वाक्यान् वाचो विग्लापनं हि तत् ।

Compare also the simile used in the *Swetaswatara* :

यदा चर्म्मैवद् आकाशं वेष्टयिष्यन्ति मानवाः ॥—" Should men be able to encompass the heavens, as they do a patch of skin."

talk much about it; do not believe simply because the written testimony of some ancient sage is shown thee; never believe anything because presumption is in its favour, or because the custom of many years leads thee to regard it as true; do not believe anything on the mere authority of teachers or priests. Whatever, according to thine own experience and after thorough investigation, agrees with thy reason and is conducive to thine own weal and to that of all other living beings, *that* accept as truth and live accordingly." In saying all this, the Buddha was really confirming the teaching of the Upanishads and the *Gita*. What says the *Gita*? "Of as much use are all the Vedas, to the Knower of Truth, as is a reservoir where the whole countryside is flooded by water"; and we may read in the Upanishads: "When you have attained soul-wisdom, throw away all your books, as the husbandman discards the well, when the corn has been garnered".¹ At one stage the Scriptures were of use. But now they are for you only "learned trash". Do not be inebriated with their verbosity—do not make a fetish of them but achieve *Aparoksha Anuvuti*—open out thine eye of wisdom and attain direct perception of Truth.

¹ यावानर्थं उदपाने सर्वतः संप्लुतोदके ।

तावान् सर्वेषु वेदेषु ब्राह्मणस्य विजानतः ॥ *Gita*.

ग्रन्थमभ्यस्य मेधावी ज्ञानविज्ञानतत्परः ।

पलालमिव धान्यार्थी त्यजेद्ग्रन्थान् अशेषतः ॥ *Upanishad*.

After all, Religion is Realization. It is, as Rabindranath Tagore observes, "the truth of our complete being, the consciousness of our personal relationship with the Infinite." As Lord Haldane has pithily said: "The Finite and the Infinite appear in the end to be no longer independent existences". The Brahman, be sure, is not a Being enthroned apart on a sapphire seat in a far-off heaven. He is, as the Sufi mystic declares, "First and last, end and limit of all things, incomparable and unchangeable, always near, yet always far"; in the words of the Upanishads: *Durat sudure Tad Ihantike cha*: He is nearer than our hands and feet and is seated in the cavity of our own heart; *Guhahitam, Gahwares-thham, Puranam*: We are verily tabernacles of God and the Most High dwelleth in each of us.¹ So the fulfilment of each man's religious destiny must consist in this realization of his essential unity with the Divine Life, by a process of ecstatic beatification through love or wisdom—through *Prema* or *Gnanam*—which in this country we know by the technical name of "Yoga". Therefore true religion is a matter of direct immediate first-hand experience, not by any means a matter of hearsay. He who can merely say: "Thus have I heard" and cannot say: "I know" is, to borrow a legal phrase, out of court. Thus, Religion is

¹ देहो देवालयः प्रोक्तः यो जीवः स सदाशिवः । *Upanishad*.

not a matter for the priest and the *Purohita* but for the Prophet and the Paigumbar—those who can say with the ancient Rishis : *Vedaham Etam Purusam Mahantam*. “Verily I have known the Divine Effulgence, beyond the depths of darkness and limitation, and the golden veil which, before I was born again, *i.e.*, regenerated, hid the face of my Beloved, has now been drawn aside. Thus have I seen Him face to face.” *Tat Twam Pusan—Apavrinu Satyadharmaya Dristaye*—seen my Beloved, who is dearer than offspring, dearer than wealth, dearer than anything—Preyah Puttrat, Preyo Bittwat Preyah Anyasmat Sarvasmat. This is the mysticism of the true saint and sage, on which Krishnaji is insisting—the mysticism of those who are able temperamentally to react to the vision of Reality—what is called *Satyasya Satyam*, “the Reality of the Real” in the Upanishads.

PLACE OF GURUS

After all, Gurus are but guides—sign-posts on the steep and rugged path. As the *Voice of the Silence* has put it: “Prepare thyself, for thou wilt have to travel on alone. The teacher can but point the way”; but, as the Buddha said, it is your own feet which must tread the path. As Krishnaji points out, “in the majority of cases, the instruction, the guides, the examples, become but a sanctuary for the frightened, who, through

imitation, (mark the words) hope to realize". But Realization cannot come from outside. It must be attained through interior discipline and inner creative effort, on which Krishnaji insists so much ; for, what he calls gaining "the inner experience of the Eternal" can only be achieved by oneself, never by another. May I, in this connection, recall to you the words of *Light on the path*: "Each man is to himself absolutely the way, the truth, and the life . . . Seek it by plunging into the mysterious and glorious depths of your own inmost being. Seek it by testing all experience . . . And seek it by making the profound obeisance of the soul to the dim star that burns within." All this is or ought to be familiar to our members in the Theosophical Society, for all our leaders have been repeating this these many many years. Let me quote to you only one sentence from Bishop Leadbeater: "The Christ is born within the heart of every one of us. But, remember, He must grow within us, so that we may come to the measure of the stature of His fullness."

Let us, however, not make the mistake of thinking that when Krishnaji calls upon us to discard scriptural authority, he invites us to make the rush-light of rationalism, with its reliance on the feeble prop of the intellect, our guiding star in the quest of truth. By no means. On the contrary, he, in common with other great Teachers, advises us to call to our aid the potent illumination of

Intuition and Yoga, so that we may reach the Goal. For after all what is the intellect on which we pride ourselves? It is, as Bergson has pointed out, a specialized aspect of the Self, a form of consciousness. Life has evolved it in the interests of Life, has made it capable of dealing with "Solids," with concrete things. With these it is at home. Outside of them, it becomes dazed, uncertain of itself—for it is no longer doing its natural work, which is to help Life, not to know it. In the interests of experience and in order to grasp perceptions, the intellect breaks up experience, (which is in reality a continuous stream, an incessant process of change and response, with no separate parts), into purely conventional "moments," "periods" or psychic "states". It picks out from the flow of Reality those bits which are significant for human life, which interest it, catch its attention. From these, it makes up a mechanical world in which it dwells and which seems quite real until it is subjected to criticism. It does the work of a cinematograph; it takes snapshots of something which is always moving and by means of these successive static representations (none of which are real, because Life, the object photographed, never was at rest), it recreates a picture of Life, of motion. This picture, this rather jerky representation of divine harmony from which innumerable moments are left out, is very useful for practical purposes; but it is not Reality because it is not alive. Elsewhere

Bergson remarks: "Intuition and intellect represent two opposite directions of the work of consciousness. Intuition goes in the very direction of Life; intellect in the opposite direction . . . Intellect is characterized by a natural inability to know life. Instinct is sympathy and turned towards life." Bergson's disciple Wildon Carr amplifying all this says: "What then is the Intellect? It is to the mind what the eye or ear is to the body. Just as in the course of evolution, the body has become endowed with certain special sense-organs, which enable it to receive the revelation of Reality without, and at the same time limit the extent and the form of that revelation, so the intellect is a special adaptation of the mind which enables the being endowed with it, to view the Reality outside it, but which at the same time limits both the extent and character of the view the mind takes."

Eucken had anticipated all this when he said: "Reality is an independent spiritual world, unconditioned by the apparent world of sense. To know it and to live in it is man's true destiny. His point of contact with it is 'personality,' the inward fount of his being: his heart, not his head."

That is why the Upanishads say: *Hrida Manisa—Manasaviklipatah*—"By the heart, by the illumined mind, is He known"; and *Naisa Tarkena Matirapaneya*: "By intellectual subtlety you cannot touch the Truth."

Therefore Eucken declares that there is a definite transcendental principle in man which he calls "Gemuth"—probably the same as the *Guha* of the Upanishads—which "is the core of personality and where God and Man initially meet".

This seems to be the explanation why Sankara and other great Acharyas in this country attached so much importance to "Revelation" derived from Rishis who are free from error, illusion and deception (*Vrama*, *Pramada* and *Vipralipsa*) and why in the old days Rationalists, who solely relied on the Intellect to the exclusion of "Illumination," were regarded as Nihilists or *Nastikas*.

THE DIRECT PATH

And what about the Direct Path—which for the moment we will take to mean the path that goes straight to the mountain top—the *Pak-Dandi*, as distinguished from the broad cart-road of easy gradient that winds round and round the mountain? Well, if you have a doughty pair of legs and are blessed with strong thews and muscles and powerful lungs withal, by all means ascend by the *Pak-Dandi*. But do not grudge an old and decrepit brother like myself (and there are many like me in this world) the use of the carriage way, and a hill stick to boot, and even crutches, if indispensable to him, so long as he is striving to reach the height. Unless you have lived in the valleys all your life, you must

know that hill-climbing is a difficult job, specially when, as often happens, grey mists overhang its rough and stony heights, which impede your vision and obstinately refuse to lift. In such moments, hints and suggestions coming from guides, who have made the same journey before, are of material assistance. After all, what is of importance is that your eye be fixed on your goal and you do not loiter on the way or be diverted into tempting by-paths, against which Krishnaji has repeatedly warned us. So *The Voice of the Silence* admonishes the Disciple: "If thou wouldst cross the second (hall) safely, stop not the fragrance of its stupefying blossoms to inhale . . . The wise ones tarry not in pleasure-grounds of the senses. The wise heed not the sweet-tongued voices of illusion".

EVOLUTION AND THE TIME-ELEMENT

Progress is undoubtedly the law of life but, as Browning has said, "Man is not Man yet." No doubt, we are all sparks of the Divine Flame, wavelets of the boundless Ocean of Life. But we are, as Sir Oliver Lodge reminds us, many of us, yet immature, ugly like an embryo, unfinished, incomplete, imperfect, like a building covered by a scaffolding. That is why there is yet so much evil in the world, so much human sin and every variety of abomination. In the fullness of time, a day will come, as H. G. Wells assures us, "when beings who

are now latent in our thoughts and hidden in our loins shall stand upon this earth, as one stands upon a foot-stool and shall laugh and reach out their hands amidst the stars". Let us hasten that glorious day of fulfilment as we can. But remember all the same that that day is not yet and that at present men and women occupy different stairs and stand on different rungs of the evolutionary ladder. Remember, also, that though from the point of view of the Absolute, Time is an illusion and what we call the future is already contained in the present—or as Krishnaji puts it, "to a liberated man, there is no time"—yet in the process of unfoldment that we know as Evolution, Time is an important factor. We had to wait four hundred million years (I am taking Sir Oliver Lodge's estimate) for the appearance of the human race upon this planet and it will be a few millions of years yet, before humanity, in the mass, shall have realized Jesus Christ's injunction: "Be ye perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect." Progress taken in the gross has assuredly been slow. Things have moved on to be sure—but only in arithmetical progression, 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, etc. Presently, let us hope, it will gather momentum and the progression will become what is called geometrical: 1, 3, 9, 27, 81, 243 and so on. Later still, (this is not a bold prophecy to make), the meandering stream, when nearing the sun-lit sea, will turn into a mighty torrent, so that in the closing stages of humanity, progress will mount

up, as Bishop Leadbeater says, by "powers"—3, 9, $9 \times 9 = 81$, $81 \times 81 = 6,561$ and so on. But all through, the time-element will be in operation, *Kalah Kalayatam Aham*.

This progression, as we say in Theosophy, is from nescience to omniscience, from the a-conscious to the all-conscious, or as Krishnaji has beautifully put it, from unconscious perfection through conscious imperfection to conscious perfection. Therefore the law must inevitably be: from unconscious realization, through conscious revelation, to conscious realization. Krishnaji does not ignore this. Tracing the story of his own evolution, he has told us how a tiny spark, now known as Krishnamurti, has, fed by experience, in the course of ages, developed into a flame and how in his unregenerate days he too sat at the feet of his Master, of whom he says: "Without Him I could have done nothing but through His help I have set my feet upon the Path." But later he found, as you and I also shall find some day, that he must always return from the Master's feet unto himself and now he has so returned. So Jesus, as Luke tells us, increased in wisdom and in stature, which means, I take it, that he passed through stages of growth.

Speaking only recently at Ommen on liberation, Krishnaji said: "If you travel to a great distance, you require a number of relays of horses and the last horse is not the one that brings you to

the goal. All are necessary, not merely the one." This seems to have ruffled the peace of mind of a devoted follower who, more royalist than the king himself, came down the very next day with this sledge-hammer question: "You spoke yesterday of relays of horses to arrive at the goal. But does not this simile send us back to the old theory of Gurus, steps on the path, Initiation, and so forth, and the necessity of these at certain stages?" What was Krishnaji's answer? "To me there is no teacher or Guru except Life—not life personified in the one but life in the many." This cannot but be so, because, with true understanding in his heart, Krishnaji, as he tells us, has now become one with the rhythm of life. For, when you are unified with the Beloved, what do you care for anything else? As we say in Hindi: *Yav Pitamse Priti Lagi Kya Vidyut Kya Rashi Hai*. So he says in another place: "To me, as I have carefully explained, these are unnecessary. Truth is everywhere, in everything, in every stone, in every leaf, in every bird, in every human mind and heart, and no one holds the key to that except yourself." And this Truth, this Beloved, as he has told us again and again, is none other than Life. What is again this Life with which he has become unified? "It is the life that is in all things, from the stone on the road, smeared with dust, to the most scrupulously cleansed, civilized man." Or as the Vedantist will say, from Brahma to the stubble at your feet—

Brahmadi-stamba-paryantam. "When one has reached his goal, he no longer requires the torch that lighted his way through the night forest." Mount one step higher (I am using human language but there is no step and no one to mount) and you have:

"Neither creation nor dissolution, neither bondage nor instruction, neither the desire to be liberated nor liberation itself—from the absolute point of view."²

All this is very simple but suppose you are still on the way and have not yet attained, can you imitate one who has reached the goal? Here comes in what we call *Adhikari Bheda* in Hinduism. Remember that what is meat for men is poison for babes and that what is good for one at an advanced stage of evolution becomes evil for another at a lower stage. Also remember Sri Krishna's advice in the *Gita*: "Better is one's own dharma though devoid of merit than the well-discharged dharma of another," which, though right for that other, may spell disaster for him. That is why the great Suka in the *Bhagavata* enjoins on king Parikshit that the advice of the Great Ones is to be followed but their example is not to be imitated. That is I

¹ परमं ब्रह्म विज्ञाय उल्कावत्तान्यथोत्सृजेत् ।

—अमृतनाद, १ ।

² न निरोधो न चोत्पत्तिर्न वन्यो न च शासनम् ।

न मुमुक्षा न मुक्तिश्च इत्येषा परमार्थता ॥—*Upanishad.*

believe what Krishnaji meant to convey when he said recently, in answer to a question as to our taking part in games, dancing and smoking: "There is a slogan, I believe, in America, 'Be your age'—which is very applicable at the present time" (why at the present? it is applicable at all times). "It is no good behaving, when one is fifty like a boy of twenty." I say the vice versa is also true. If one is a boy of twenty, it is no good behaving as if he were a "grave seigneur" of fifty. I am of course thinking not merely of the age of the physical body but of the age of the Soul.

It is well to bear in mind that Krishnaji has put precise and rather rigid conditions for one who would wish to go his way: "You must have a strong and pure heart. You must possess wisdom, experience, intuition. If not, the sun will set many times before you will see Truth." Taking into his consideration the fact that very few at the present stage of human evolution are able to fulfil these conditions, he says that he would be happy if he could find two or three persons who would understand and realize his ideal. By this does he not endorse what Sri Krishna said in the *Gita*: "Out of tens of thousands only one here and one there hunger for attainment"? and also what Jesus Christ said in the Bible: "Straight is the gate and narrow is the way . . . and few there be that find it"? "Many are called but few chosen." That, unfortunately, is

the experience of all who have reached the mountain top, with regard to those who are still walking in the valleys. That is why Krishnaji does not want *followers*; yet we in our unwisdom thrust ourselves on him and, self-constituting ourselves into his followers, presume to follow him to the rarified air of his lofty heights.

Mrs. Marie R. Hotchener writes that recently when she said to Krishnaji in Hollywood: "You speak of reincarnation, of evolution, of karma, of life after death, and in your earlier books you taught the Ancient Wisdom as a Theosophist. So where am I wrong in following those teachings?" he answered: "They are facts in Nature, they are explanations but one does not need them." Now, frankly, this is not clear to me. Did Krishnaji mean to lay down as a *general* proposition that explanations of the riddle of life, based on facts in Nature, are not needed at all, or did he intend to limit its application to those few, who with a long evolutionary past behind them, are now treading the direct path, with one-pointed determination to reach the goal? If the latter (which I believe is the case), then Krishnaji was endorsing the Upanishadic teaching:

Anyām Vacham Vimunchata Amritasyaisa setuh. "Leave off all else and cross over to the shore of Immortality."

Or did he mean that "life is not a problem to be solved but a mystery to be experienced," echoing

the sentiment of the Lord Buddha, when he declared :

" Veil after veil will lift—but there must be
Veil upon veil behind."

* * * *

" This is enough to know, the phantasms are ;
The Heavens, Earths, Worlds, and changes
changing them.

A mighty whirling wheel of strife and stress
Which none can stay or stem."

CLEAVAGE FROM THE PAST

When Krishnaji expresses his disapproval of our (I am quoting his words) " constant battle of adjustment, not to discover what is true but to try to reconcile what I say with what you have already found, with what is already established for you by another " and enjoins that if we would diligently follow what he says, mentally, then there must be a complete cleavage from preconceived ideas—is it his idea that we are, as Samuel Johnson used to say, " to clear our minds of cant " and razing out the written troubles of the brain lay it open for the reception of truth, " as the lotus bares its heart to drink the morning sun " ? It may be *that* but probably the implication is far deeper, specially when Krishnaji goes on to say that " you cannot reconcile certain things. There cannot be a compromise in *certain things*." What are these things ? " You

cannot find truth by all the time adjusting it to illusions. You have to find out what is illusion and what is reality. To do this you must have a free mind." Does not this bring back to your memory the introductory passage in Sankaracharya's great commentary on the *Brahma-Sutras* where explaining "Adhyasa" he says: "As well try to reconcile the light and the darkness, as make a compromise between illusion and Reality, which are totally separate but which we in our ignorance join together."¹

Krishnaji's attitude is, I believe, akin to that taken up by Sankaracharya when he insisted that there was and could be no *karma* for the true knower of Brahman. For whereas in the case of the illuminated—the true *jnani*—the subject and the object have coalesced into the Unity, and the triplicity (*Triputi*) of the Knower, the Knowledge and the Known has disappeared, how can there be action? So the *Brihad Aranyaka* lays down that the A-Kama, Nis-Kama, Atma-Kama, Apta-Kama—he who is void of desire, has conquered desire, who desires only the Atman, has realized the Atman—he becoming Brahman, unites with Brahman."

¹युस्मद्स्मत्प्रत्ययगोचरयोर्विषयविषयिणोस्तमःप्रकाशवद्विरुद्धस्वभावयोरिति - तरेतरभावानुपपत्तौ सिद्धायाम् इतरेतराविवेकेन अत्यन्तविविक्तयोः धर्मधर्मिणोः मिथ्याज्ञाननिमित्तः सत्यानृते मिथुनीकृत्य "अहम् इदं ममेदम्" इति नैसर्गिकोऽयं लोकव्यवहारः ।

²अकामो निष्काम आत्मकाम आप्तकामः ब्रह्मैव सन् ब्रह्म अभ्येति—बृह., ४।४।६

I therefore venture to suggest that these and other "dark sayings" of Krishnaji ought not to cause perplexity or lead to unrest in the Society.

KRISHNAJI AND THE WORLD TEACHER

The real trouble, if we are frank with ourselves, is that some of us regard every word and gesture of Krishnaji's as emanating from the World Teacher and possessing therefore absolute validity and unquestioned authority (though Krishnaji himself has repeatedly warned us against adopting this attitude towards him); because he has contradicted or at least has not endorsed some of the announcements of our Leaders, such as the choosing of the twelve apostles and the coming of the World Mother, some of us feel terribly upset and begin to question the wisdom of having ever joined the Theosophical Society. For my part, I make a sharp distinction between Krishnaji's personality and what I may call the "impersonality" of the World Teacher. That Krishnaji serves as a vehicle of the World Teacher, whom we in India speak of as Lord Maitreya, I have no manner of doubt. That he sometimes radiates an extraordinary affluence—a sort of magnetic effusion, which suffuses one with a certain spiritual grace and serves as a delicious spiritual bath—no sensitive person, who has come into personal contact with him, will deny. But in his case, as in the case of previous Avatars

(I am not using this word in its restricted technical sense) "the afflatus from above" comes and goes—*Yogo hi Prabhabapyayau*. This need not either shock or surprise us. For the afflatus was not constant even with Sri Krishna, whom many of us regard as God Almighty—*Krisnastu Bhagavan Swayam*.

Thus, when, after the Kurukshetra War was over, Arjuna asked him to repeat the *Gita*, for his edification, what was Sri Krishna's reply? "I am unable to comply with your request, because when I gave the *Gita*, I was in a high state of Yoga, which is now shut out to me."¹

Take the case of Sri Rama. In his ordinary brain-consciousness he was not even aware of the divine afflatus. So, when after the killing of Ravana, the Devas, headed by Brahma, appeared to acclaim him, he asked them: "I know myself as a mere man, the son of Dasaratha. Tell me, I pray, whence and who I am," and Brahma had to remind him that he was none other than Vishnu himself, entered into a human vehicle.²

¹ न शक्यं तन्मया वक्तुमशेषेण धनञ्जय ।

परं हि ब्रह्म कथितं योगयुक्तेन तन्मया ॥

महाभारत, अनुशासनपर्व, १७ अ ।

² आत्मानं मानुषं मन्ये रामं दशरथात्मजम् ।

सोहं यश्च यतश्चाहं भगवान् तद्वीतु मे ॥

वधार्थं रावणस्येह प्रविष्टो मानुषीं तनुम् ।

रामायण—६, ११८, २७ ।

In the case of Sri Chaitanya, the Avatara of Nadia (Bengal), we have the clearest evidence that he had constant alterations of personality, his, what I may call, opaque moments alternating with lucid ones. In the case of Jesus, it is on record that about the ninth hour, when nailed to the cross, he cried with a loud voice: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" Not only that, but before the last supper, he withdrew (we are told) from his disciples, about a stone's cast and kneeled down and prayed saying: "Father! if thou be willing remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not *my* will but *Thine* be done"; and there appeared an angel from heaven, strengthening him and, being in an agony, he prayed most earnestly and his sweat, as it were, was great drops of blood, falling down to the ground (Luke, Ch. XXII, 40-4).

WHAT IS AVESHA ?

I have said that the higher afflatus comes and goes in Avataras. This must be so, because it is really a case of what we speak of as "Avesha" in this country—a phenomenon akin, on a higher plane, to what is being discussed as "control" or "possession" in western psychology. Now what happens in "control"? Let Frederic Myers answer for me. "If we analyze our observations of possession, we find two main factors—the

central operation, which is the control by a spirit of the sensitive's organism, and the indispensable prerequisite, which is the partial and temporary desertion of that organism by the percipient's own spirit . . . The claim then is that the automatist, in the first place, falls into a trance during which his spirit partially 'quits his body,' enters at any rate into a state in which the spiritual world is more or less open to its perception and in which also—and this is the novelty—it so far ceases to occupy the organism as to leave room for an invading spirit to use it, in somewhat the same fashion as its owner is accustomed to use it. After a time the control gives way and the automatist's spirit returns. The automatist, awaking, may or may not remember his experiences in the Spiritual World during the trance." (*Human Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death*, Ch.IX, pp. 298-9.)

This phenomenon often took place in connection with Madame Blavatsky, as we may read in Colonel Olcott's *Old Diary Leaves* (Vol. 1, pp. 243-4). "Now often things were, after a while, said to me that would be more than hints that other intelligences than H.P.B.'s were at times using her body as a writing machine. . . . The change was as plain as day . . . One of these *Alter Egos* of hers, one whom I have since personally met, wears a full beard and long moustache that are twisted, Rajput fashion, into his wide whiskers. He has the habit of constantly pulling at his moustache, when deeply

pondering; he does it mechanically and unconsciously. Well, there were times when H.P.B.'s personality had melted away and she was '*Somebody else*' when I would sit and watch her hand as if pulling at and twisting a moustache that certainly was not growing visibly on H.P.B.'s upper lip, and the far-away look would be in the eyes, until presently resuming attention of passing things, the moustached Somebody would look up, catch me watching him, hastily remove the hand from the face, and go on with the work of writing."

We have reliable evidence that this alternation of personality was a familiar phenomenon in connection with Sri Chaitanya's brother Viswarupa who, after his departure from the physical plane, used the bodies of more than one individual to serve and protect and assist his great brother. This, I suggest, is what exactly happens in the case of Avataras and it is worthy of note that the Gnostic section of the Christian Church always looked upon Jesus and the Christ as two separate beings, of whom one (Jesus) lent, as it were, the use of his body to the Christ and that the Christ was the tenant of that body during the years of his ministry. So in the case of Sri Krishna, it was the Rishi Narayana who provided the physical vehicle for the manifestation of the Most High, as we are told in numerous passages in the *Mahabharata*, the *Bhagavata* and elsewhere. I have quoted several of them in my Bengali book *Avatara-Tatwa*

where the whole subject of "incarnation" is dealt with in some detail. Here I must content myself by citing a single passage (see foot-note).¹

It should also be noted that in some instances, after the afflatus had permanently withdrawn and the controlling spirit had departed, the vehicle went on, informed by the former tenant. A notable illustration of this is furnished by the case of Parasurama. We find that when he contacted Rama, as the latter was on his way from Mithila to Ayodhya, the Divine Power that was then residing in him passed away from his body to that of Rama.² After this incident, Rama of the Axe, though shorn of his glory, lived on for many long

¹ नरनारायणौ यौ तौ तवेवार्जुनकेवौ ।

विजानीहि महाराज प्रवीरौ पुष्पभौ ॥

उद्योगपर्व ५६ ४६ ।

"Know thou, O great king! that the Rishis, Nara and Narayana are these two heroes—Arjuna and Sri Krishna, the bulls among men."

² ततः परशुरामस्य देहान्निर्गत्य वैष्णवम् ।

पश्यतां सर्वदेवानां तेजो राममुपागमत् ॥ नृसिंह ॥

इत्युक्तो देवि ! वैष्णव्या शक्त्या तद्रतया सह ।

जग्राह वैष्णवं चापं विनयेन च लीलया ॥ पद्म ॥

"Thereupon the divine 'afflatus' issuing forth out of the body of Parasurama entered that of Sri Rama in the presence of all the Devas"—*Nrisinha Purana*. "Saying this, Sri Rama, with ease and without boastfulness, took away (from Parasurama) the bow of Vishnu, together with the Divine Power that was residing in him"—*Padma Purana*.

years and, as we may read in the *Mahabharata*, challenged the great Visma to an unrighteous duel and was defeated.

In the case of the Rishi Narayana also, we have authentic information that though Sri Krishna dissociated from his body, after the extermination of the Yadus at Pravasa, he (Narayana) still abides at Badari in the holy Himalayas, doing his mighty work for the upliftment of the world.¹

THE FRAGMENT-ASPECT OF AVATARAS

It should also be noted that in the case of Avataras, it is invariably an *Amsa*, a fragment of the Divine or Higher Consciousness, that enters into or works through the chosen vehicle. This must be so, for, as Sir Oliver Lodge points out, it is not possible for any human body, however pure or worthy or well trained, to transmit, without detriment to itself, the full effulgence. Lodge illustrates this by the analogy of the sun, which, should we ever dare to approach it in its unveiled majesty, will not only burn us up completely but disintegrate our globe itself into its constituent atoms. That is why, by

¹ यो वै भारतवर्षेऽस्मिन् क्षेमाय स्वस्तये नृणाम् ।

धर्मज्ञानशमोपेत आकल्पादास्थितस्तपः ॥

भागवत ।

“ Who, in this land of *Bharata*, for the weal and the healing of men, is abiding till the end of the *Kalpa*, engaged in *Tapas* and endowed with Dharma, wisdom and self-control.”

Divine Providence, a minute fraction of the whole is all that is revealed to us. That is what happened even in the case of Sri Krishna himself. Therefore the Hindu books, in several places, speak of him figuratively as a hair from the body of Vishnu, that is, a tiny fragment of that Divine Consciousness.

After all, it is the *quality* of the Consciousness that matters—not the quantity.¹

¹ The student may, in this connection, refer to the *Mahabharata*, Book I, Ch. 197, 22, 23 and Ch. 67, 71, *Bhagavata*, X, 2-9, and 11, 7-26, and *Vishnu Purana* and *Devi Bhagavata*. I only cite here three verses from the books above referred to, together with their translations.

तयोरेको बलदेवो बभूव योऽसौ श्वेतस्तस्य देवस्य केशः ।

कृष्णो द्वितीयः केशवः संवभूव केशो योऽसौ वर्णतः कृष्ण उक्तः ॥

महाभारत—१५७, ३३

भूमेः सुरेतरवस्थविमर्दितायाः

क्लेशव्ययाय कलया सितकृष्णकेशः ॥ भागवत—२, ७, २६

यः स नारायणो नाम देवदेवः सनातनः ।

तस्यांशो वासुदेवस्तु कर्मणोऽन्ते विवेश ह ॥—महाभारत, स्वर्गरोहणपर्व ।

"Of the two hairs (plucked from the body of Vishnu) the white one was born as the white Balarama and the other, the black one, became Sri Krishna, the dark-coloured."—*Mahabharata*, 197-33.

"His tiny fragments, in the form of a white and a black hair, were born as Balarama and Sri Krishna, in order to ease the burden of this earth oppressed by the demons."—*Bhagavata*, 2-7-26.

"The immutable God, Narayana—His *Amsa* (fragment) was Vasudeva Sri (Krishna) and after his task was accomplished, he entered into Him (Narayana)."—*Mahabharata* 18th Section.

THE OBTRUSION OF THE PERSONALITY

Even with regard to this fragment, the personality now and again colours the white light from heaven and is unable wholly to transmit its rays. Nay more. Now and again the personality obtrudes itself and acts unaided on its own initiative as it did in the case of Sri Chaitanya when in the pride of intellect, he revelled for a time in intellectual feats of strength and indulged in what the chronicles call *Vidya-Vilasa*. This obtrusion of the personality is probably the explanation of the action of Jesus when he cursed a fig tree, because, when he came to it, it not being the fig season, the tree only bore leaves and no fruit (See Mark, Ch. XI, 12-4). It explains the action of Sri Rama when he suspected the loyalty of his devoted brother, Bharata and sent out a messenger in advance to spy on him—on Bharata, who, for his sake, had voluntarily cast away the crown (See *Ramayana*, Book VI, Ch. 127), and the cruel and cutting words with which after her rescue from Ravana he reviled his devoted wife, Sita, attributing infidelity to her, who, in thought, word or deed, had never known anyone but himself, and who for all time to come, has set the standard of chastity for Indian Womanhood, acting so (to borrow the graphic imagery of the poet Valmiki) the part of an elephant which ruthlessly tramples under foot the soft tendrils of

a delicate creeper (See *Ramayana*, Book VI, Ch. 115).

Now apply these canons of Incarnation, deducible from the precedents I have cited (which for me, as a lawyer, has great validity) to Krishnaji and you will feel no difficulty in endorsing our President's statement: "You must remember that the Lord Maitreya is so great a Being that the Chohan of the second Ray, His own Ray, said that when He went into His presence 'we feel like the dust of His feet' ". That consciousness is omnipresent. Krishnaji does not share that omniscience. A fragment of the World-Teacher's consciousness is in him, and his own is merged in it. And you must remember that, that consciousness in him, in the ordinary affairs of life, behaves like that of an ordinary man.

You will also appreciate why Krishnaji's answers to questions put to him are not all pitched in the same high key and do not all proceed from the same lofty level. Undoubtedly, Krishnaji sometimes confounds such interlocutors as put to him, what Bishop Leadbeater calls, "catchy questions," thereby confirming Solomon's wisdom: "Answer a fool according to his folly"; but even "noble" questions, involving the great realities of life, sometimes receive (when probably Krishnaji's unaided personality is at work) commonplace answers.

Therefore, I think it is unwise for our members to worry overmuch over these matters or to work

up what may be regarded as a "crisis" in the Society.

CONCLUSION

I have spoken to you freely and quite frankly. I trust I have not given offence. In times of unrest, one has to choose one's words carefully. That is why, apart from my limitations as a public speaker, I have thought it necessary to write out my speech, thereby minimizing the chances of misunderstanding. Even then, I may have hurt some friends' feelings. If so, I beg them to forgive me.

As regards the future of the Theosophical Society, I have, as already indicated, no manner of misgiving. It will assuredly live and fulfil the great purpose for which it was designed. There may and probably will be a brief spell of obscurity, due to the attention of some of our good and earnest members being exclusively diverted towards Krishnaji and the movement initiated by him. After a while, things will adjust themselves and the new wine which seems to have gone to some people's heads will have coursed through their veins. Then the Society will recover its momentum and go forward to its appointed goal with assured strides.

In the meantime what about us as members? Extremity, it has been well said, is the trier of spirits. We *are* being tried. What is our duty at

this crisis? Our duty is to be and to become good Theosophists. This, I can assure you from personal failure, is no easy task. As we say in Bengal: "I longed to become a Vaisava. But the injunction to be lowly as the grass and tolerant as the tree has blocked my way." What is the injunction in the case of a Theosophist?

Well, hear the ringing words of the Mother of the Theosophical Society: "A clean life, an open mind, a pure heart, an eager intellect, an unveiled spiritual perception, a brotherliness for all, a readiness to give and receive advice and instruction, a loyal sense of duty to the Teacher, a courageous endurance of personal injustice, a brave declaration of principles, a valiant defence of those who are unjustly attacked and a constant eye to the Ideal of human progress and perfection, which the Sacred Science depicts—these are the golden stairs, up the steps of which the learner may climb to the temple of Divine Wisdom." Does this ideal seem too distant and difficult of achievement? Nay, give heed to the comforting words of Krishnaji:

"Achievement is postponed indefinitely because of the dull laziness of slow energy; but if you have the intense desire, you have no wish to postpone. There must be this high concentration, this realization of inward being. *That* effort is possible for every one, if *only* there is the impelling desire behind it . . . surely anyone can do so, if he is willing to concentrate, to have this intense faith . . .

With that, anyone can achieve." Listen also to the words of another Great One and rest not till you have achieved :

"To will, to know, to dare and to be silent."

FIFTH LECTURE

THE FUTURE OF
THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

BY C. JINARĀJADĀSA

FRIENDS :

It is surely an axiom that the welfare of the Theosophical Society depends on the Theosophists who compose its members, and obviously that further depends on what is their understanding of Theosophy. As is Theosophy, and as are the Theosophists, so will be the nature of the Society. If we can define Theosophy, then we can say what a Theosophist ought to be, and from that what should be the ideal nature of the Society.

The Society has now been working for fifty-five years, and to-day it is composed of forty-six National Societies. We have a literature on Theosophy in many languages, and Theosophical lecturers try to expound what is Theosophy in many tongues. Now, the Society has a Constitution, that is to say, it works under certain definite rules. That Constitution gives us the Objects of the Society, and there are also in it rules which deal with the transaction of necessary business.

It is a striking fact that, in the only document which binds together all the members of the Society from every country, that is, the Constitution of the Theosophical Society, the word Theosophy is not mentioned. According to our Constitution, the Society does not exist to proclaim what the world calls Theosophy as the Society's philosophy; the Society does not exist to proclaim the truth of any religion whatsoever or of any philosophy. What then does the Society exist for? Its aims are stated in its three Objects, which may be summarized as follows: first, to promote Brotherhood; second, to encourage men to seek a Wisdom; and third, to discover the God in man.

Thence issue two problems. The first is the general problem of what is Theosophy, and the second the particular problem of what should be the nature of the Theosophical Society. I propose to deal first with the general problem—what do we mean by Theosophy, what is its definition?

The first use on record of the word Theosophy is by Proclus, in the fifth century A.D. As he speaks of a "Theosophy of the foreigners," evidently he contrasts it in his mind with a Theosophy of the Greeks. Ever since the days of the Neo-Platonists, the word has signified a kind of inner mystical knowledge held by philosophers and mystics, and particularly a kind of knowledge which was not revealed to people at large by the religion of the day.

This conception of Theosophy or a Divine Wisdom which we find among the Gnostics is exactly the same as what we find here in India among our philosophers. *Brahma Vidyā*, the knowledge as to Brahman, could be proclaimed only by those who "know Brahman". These teachers, in a mystical succession of *Guruparamparā*, or apostolic succession, pass their knowledge on from Guru to pupil. Each who carries on the traditional knowledge adds something of his own discovery as to the nature of Brahman.

When we come to modern Theosophy, we start with a body of ideas given by those who are called the Masters of Wisdom. It was in 1875 that under their inspiration Madame Blavatsky initiated the Theosophical Movement. The Society was started in order that the teachings which they had given to her concerning the larger vision of life might be given to the whole world. The Masters themselves, as they gave their teaching, proclaimed that what they said was not new. They said: "This is the Ancient Wisdom, we only tell it to you again to-day." But since they gave a teaching, we may say that modern Theosophy started with a revelation of a kind. But if we were to say that Theosophy to-day consists only of a revelation, only of the teaching given by the Masters, I hold we should certainly not be making an accurate statement.

In my own mind, since Theosophy is the Divine Wisdom which deals with the nature of God and the

nature of man, that Wisdom must inevitably be added to, as the generations pass one by one. As the universe unfolds itself, whether it be according to a Divine Plan or not, Theosophy or the Wisdom about that universe must also grow.

It is perfectly true that we have certain great ideas which come from the mysticisms of the past as a nucleus of Theosophy. But it is only a nucleus. Theosophy is being added to by every generation. Every one of you, every human being who assimilates a single experience of life, adds to Theosophy thereby. For a man's experience is the statement by his consciousness of the relation between him and the Absolute; and because each man is different from all others, his experience is an element to be added to the sum total of experience which we call Theosophy. Therefore Theosophy is increasing, is growing from age to age; and all of us, even the youngest members of the Society, nay more, every one who lives in the world, even the coolies in the streets, are adding to what Theosophy is as the Perfect Wisdom.

Furthermore, if Theosophy is the Wisdom, then every form of knowledge is a part of that Wisdom. That is why to me every discovery of modern science is part inseparable of Theosophy. All that our scientists are discovering in the laboratories is Theosophy, and the more I know of those discoveries of the scientists and of their speculations, the more I understand the Theosophy which I find in

Theosophical books. In addition still, every form of truth, not only in religion and science, but in every department of human activity, is to me Theosophy. Thus, in that great domain which we call Art, I find Theosophy. I cannot conceive of Theosophy except as interpenetrating all the activities of the artists of the world ; all the subtle manifestations of the human Spirit which we call Art reveal Theosophy.

Therefore, Theosophy is growing, and it must always inevitably grow. And the result is, that no one person can define what Theosophy is. But you may say : " Are you not a Theosophical lecturer ? Have you not travelled from country to country lecturing on Theosophy, telling people what Theosophy is ? " Yes, but as I try to do that work of telling people something of the Wisdom, there is always a reservation in my own mind. It is, that I am expounding only the little that I have discovered of Theosophy. It has never been in my mind that I stand forth as the proclaimer of all the Theosophy that exists. I can assure you that sometimes I have been in a quandary, because when lecturing I must to some extent be dogmatic in order to be clear and precise, and so cannot help offering a teaching as if all Theosophists were committed to my aspect of that teaching.

There are, in fact, many kinds of Theosophy to be found in the so-called manuals and text books, and in the general literature of Theosophical authors.

Certainly we recommend selected books for enquirers as those most helpful to them to understand what is Theosophy. But such a list is only issued as the most helpful in the judgment of some. Inevitably each such list is challenged, and rightly so. Every list of books issued by any organization or body of students as the "best for study" will always be challenged. And yet, as a practical body of Theosophists, working to make the world understand certain principles of Wisdom, we must offer something. On the other hand, as we offer, it is right that we should be met with the challenge: "Are you sure you are offering the best books?" Who shall tell us what Theosophy is, since by the very nature of Brahma Vidyā, the Divine Wisdom, no one has a right to say: "Thus far is truth, and no further?" How can we offer any book, any list of books, which shall always remain the best?

Therefore, the only solution is this: that each inquirer must read, listen and discover, not what is Dr. Besant's Theosophy or Madame Blavatsky's Theosophy, but his own Theosophy. You will remember what was said in India: "Arise, awake, seek out the Great Ones and get understanding." But whose understanding? The understanding of the Teachers? That surely could not have been the meaning underlying those words. Seek out the Teachers and listen, but get your own understanding; for it is only when you discover your own Theosophy

that for the first time you become something of a true Theosophist.

The logical result of what I am saying is this. There are as many Theosophies as there are members of the Society; and more still than that, there are as many Theosophies as there are human beings in this world. That is why, while I read certain books which are labelled Theosophical, I read also books on science. I read too books of poetry, and go from museum to museum of pictures and statues, and from concert to concert of music. And I move about in the cities, particularly where the poor are suffering. For in all those places, I find some sentence of the Divine Wisdom.

While then we have to-day a body of truths that now passes for Theosophy, we have to discover more truths still. To achieve that result, we have a fund of knowledge to start with -first of all the traditions of the past. These were summarized for the first time by Madame Blavatsky in *Isis Unveiled*. I certainly hold that what is called "tradition" does contain a part of the Wisdom. Then, wherever there are living teachers who are ready to teach any aspect of the Wisdom, what they give to us is also a part of the Wisdom. Thus, such a work as Sinnett's *The Occult World*, which contains the teachings which the Masters gave, is also a part of Theosophy. By studying what the living teachers, the Great Ones, reveal, we discover more of Theosophy than exists in traditions.

Furthermore, wherever there is a member of the Society who, by faculties of his own, investigates any aspect of Nature, everything which he discovers is to me an additional way of understanding more of Theosophy. Take, for instance, those rather special investigations of Dr. Besant and Bishop Leadbeater into the records of the past, investigations which they made by clairvoyance. Take also their other investigations concerning the nature of the atom. To me, who accept the facts recorded by them, those investigations of theirs also contribute to the body of knowledge which we ought to make our own as Theosophy.

I do not mean to say that every one is bound to believe what another proclaims as truth. But if a man is a sincere seeker of truth, he should seek not only in the past, study not only what the Great Ones are teaching, but also see whether what men and women on his own level have discovered, or think they have discovered, is not also truth. More still than this, if we are to receive more of Theosophy, each one of us must discover that more by meditation, by observation of life, and above all by observation of the workings of his own heart. For, there is not a child who does not reveal something of Theosophy, not a single being who aspires who does not understand something of the Perfect Wisdom.

So each one of us must be both an investigator of the Wisdom and also a contributor to its further

discovery. The two aspects are related. The more we investigate, the more we discover what is in us to give. But the more we give, however humbly, since in what we consider as true there may be many a mistake, the more we shall find of the Wisdom. I consider it should be the attitude of the Theosophist to enquire fearlessly into every problem, so that there may be no corner of earth or hell or heaven in which he is not seeking, in order to discover the Perfect Wisdom.

Regarding such an ideal search for truth, let me mention one failure on our part as Theosophists. That happened twenty-four years ago, when our members discovered that Bishop Leadbeater held some rather startling ideas as to the sex problem as it affects men. Obviously the sex problem is one of the most acute of problems, if not the most acute, which confronts mankind. And on this problem, we as Theosophists have no more light to offer than those who have not found Theosophy. We explain how every problem in the universe can be set right in the light of Theosophy, but on this problem of sex we are dumb.

Now, there was no need whatsoever for anyone to accept Bishop Leadbeater's ideas as correct; but there was the need to recognize that a very great problem existed for Theosophists to solve, though it was presented to them in a startling way. This is just what our members did not do. They confused two issues—that of Bishop Leadbeater as an

individual, and his ideas concerning a great problem. The Theosophical conscience underwent a shock, and the whole problem of sex was thrust into the background. Bishop Leadbeater resigned, and anyone who said, as I and others did, that a member of the Society had the right to remain in the Society whatever his ideas were, was promptly labelled and abused as upholding Bishop Leadbeater's ideas. It may be news to some of you that for making this stand—that the Society did wrong in forcing Bishop Leadbeater to resign—I was expelled from the Theosophical Society. Of course, I was reinstated later. But the fact that Theosophists, after expelling a man as unworthy to remain in the Society, should later elect him as its Vice-President, shows that the judgment of Theosophists is like the judgment of non-Theosophists when they lose their heads.

Now, I mention all this because we did have an opportunity to inquire into the sex problem, and we did not take it. Everybody, particularly those who later became denouncers of Bishop Leadbeater, had no doubts as to his clairvoyance, up to the time they found what were his startling ideas on the sex problem. They believed in his psychism, and they quoted his writings on the Astral and Devachanic Planes, on Thought Forms, on Life after Death, etc. Presumably he could see the invisible, and so could help us to understand the sex problem, its causes and effects, as seen from the invisible. But did anyone, as a grave student into the most vital of

problems, ask him, catechize him, as to what he had seen, beg him to investigate case after case, so that at least we might have some more facts to go upon, in order to find a solution ? That is just what the Theosophists did not do. They were afraid that they might be identified with Bishop Leadbeater's views, and so they thrust the problem into the background.

To-day, though many of you may not know of it, there is a vast body of knowledge on the sex problem. But in this body of knowledge we Theosophists might have been among the pioneers. My great regret is that we, who proclaim ourselves as lovers of knowledge and servers of mankind, once lost a very great opportunity of both knowledge and service.

It will be obvious from what I have said that the knowledge which we have to-day of Theosophy is bound to be limited. Each of us who is a Theosophical lecturer or writer can know only a part of Theosophy. Yet even that part, however fragmentary it be, is needed to-day to help men. As we go from country to country, as we look into conditions everywhere, we see how needed Theosophy is, even the fragment of it which we know. When we look into human conditions and see how the spirit of man has been imprisoned by evil traditions of race, sex, creed, caste and colour, and particularly by priesthoods, then we see clearly how greatly Theosophy is needed wherever man lives in thralldom

to tradition, confined by the limiting ideas of race and religion which are so prevalent to-day.

I come now to the particular problem of the Theosophical Society as an organization. Let me say at the outset that this particular problem will always remain, seeing that human nature is what it is. So long as men are men, we shall always have clashes of opinion as to the ways of application of the great truths in which we all believe, because each is bound to claim that he knows best how to apply a truth. Dr. J. J. van der Leeuw has said recently that there is in the Society too much "revelation", from the Masters, and from so-called "leaders". We certainly have had from time to time what can be called "revelations". But shall we profit in the Society by suppressing any type of experience which contributes to our knowledge? That seems to me is not the true way.

The way, on the other hand, is by safeguarding liberty of thought and expression, so that within the Society all may have the opportunity to assert and to deny. It is curious that when young people especially talk of liberty of thought, it means that *they* must be given full freedom to express their opinions, but not their elders. So often when people talk of liberty of thought, they mean liberty for them to deny, not the liberty for others to assert. But true liberty of thought means the freedom both to assert and to deny. The spirit of true liberty does not lie in assertion or denial, but

in the way either is done. That is why, in the statement as to "Freedom of Thought" which is published every month in *The Theosophist*, it is there said that each member has a "right of liberty of thought and expression thereof, within the limits of courtesy and consideration for others". If only we could understand what courtesy means, I do not think we would have so many troubles in the Theosophical Society.

It is perfectly true that Theosophical "leaders" dominate. But how can you help it? Can you show any way in which such a dynamic personality as Dr. Besant would *not* dominate, even if she were not the President of the Society? You cannot help some people towering head and shoulders above others. But what is needed is a corrective to their possible domination, and that is by the refusal to believe or to be led. If more and more members would be more outspoken, "within the limits of courtesy," in their non-acceptance of the views of outstanding Theosophical personalities, we should have a more healthy life in the Society.

I grant that when a member refuses to believe what a "leader" proclaims, a kind of social ostracism is sometimes apt to appear; but the reason for that is that Theosophists are human beings, and some are, if I may so put it, theosophists with a little *t*, and not Theosophists with a big *T*. Certainly there is the danger of a Theosophical orthodoxy in every Lodge. But can this be prevented

by compulsion? It is of course the duty of the officers of a Lodge to see that perfect freedom of expression is never denied to anyone. But it is no use trying to curb Theosophical leaders by saying: "You should not assert." Even if he did not ask for followers, the right kind of a "leader" would always begin to dominate, whether he wished it or not, by his sheer personality. What we can do is to see that within the Society those who assert and those who deny, "within the limits of courtesy," have equal right to contribute their work to the cause of Theosophy.

Let me point out that, on this matter of denial, already the General Council of the Society has interfered twice; the first occasion was in 1895, when a very important principle was laid down. For several years the then Vice-President, Mr. W. Q. Judge, had been giving messages from the Masters. Many accepted them thankfully, but others said: "But these are bogus messages; he has concocted them; he is deceiving people." So after long discussion, Mr. Judge was asked to prove his messages genuine. After much bitter agitation, the General Council at last met to try Mr. Judge on charges of deception. Then Mr. Judge objected before the Council that the Society could not make any enquiry at all into his conduct, because to enquire whether his messages were genuine or not would be to lay down as a belief of the Society that the Masters of Wisdom exist. The Council upheld

Mr. Judge, and laid down the principle that it is not the business of the Society to speak one way or the other as to the existence of the Masters. The Council therefore ruled that the question of the genuineness or otherwise of Mr. Judge's revelations was not a matter upon which the Society could give judgment.

Then later, in 1923, we had a similar situation. This was when a certain number of members, objecting to what they considered a departure from Theosophy, said: "Back to Blavatsky! Let us not accept any revelations since the time of Madame Blavatsky as a part of Theosophy." A meeting of the General Council which met at Vienna discussed this problem, and it said: "Let us make a pronouncement upon freedom of thought." It was then that Dr. Besant, who sees deep into problems, said that not only should no individual Theosophist since H. P. B. be given a superior position as an exponent of Theosophy, but that no exception should be made even in the case of H. P. B. herself. Dr. Besant said: "If we are to have freedom of thought, freedom must be given to deny the teachings which H. P. B. herself gave."

It was then, too, that a certain number of Theosophists said that a particular group of Theosophists, who had no official relation to the Society but still were prominent in the Society, those who belonged to the Esoteric School, should be disciplined in some way or other because they had too much influence in the Society. Others said

that a body of Theosophists who were identified with the Liberal Catholics were also unduly influencing the Society. They said: "We must see that these people do not have so much influence in the T.S." But how can we prevent them? How can we prevent *any* Theosophist from exercising an influence over others, if his character inspires others, or if they believe that his revelations are true?

Then it was that Dr. Beaant laid down a general principle that "neither a candidate for any office, nor any voter, can be rendered ineligible to stand or to vote, because of any opinion he may hold, or because of membership in any school of thought to which he may belong". If to-day any member of the Esoteric School seems to have a preponderating influence in the affairs of the Society, we cannot prevent it. The only corrective is for others to organize other Esoteric Schools. Let others also come forth saying: "We too are the heart of the Society."

Human nature being what it is, it is useless to say to members: "You shall not make this or the other assertion." I hold that in the Theosophical Society we shall do better to let *everybody* make their assertions, "within the limits of courtesy". A perfectly free platform is safer for the future of the Society than one which lays down what ought not to be said, because it is not "Theosophical".

It is likely that in the Society's organization there are many defects; no organization is perfect. But

every member should help in removing defects: that is why a General Council of the Society exists. The members of this General Council, the governing body of the Society, are human beings, and so are not perfectly wise; but they are experimenting to make a perfect organization. They desire to know the considered opinion of members. Every Theosophist can help his National Society and the International Society by pointing out, "within the limits of courtesy," errors in method.

But the trouble is this, that members will criticize privately among themselves, but will not take sufficient courage to place their criticisms before the local officers, and if necessary "fight" for reforms. Much loose talk goes on, but very few will take the trouble to be informed accurately as to what needs amendment, with the result that often their criticism is well meant but is based on the wrong facts. We have a magnificent example of tolerance of criticism in Dr. Besant, who always publishes in her magazine every criticism which is made against her. The more harsh the criticism, the more pages of her magazine are open to the critic. She is an example of that freedom of thought we talk about; she wants us to criticize. But also, she answers her critics; she does not meekly bow her head before every criticism. Then her critics complain that she is trying to dominate.

We shall certainly never have a perfect organization, but we want to work towards it. As a

member of the General Council, let me mention how members can usefully help with suggestions. They should first of all understand the mechanism of the Society. There are many people who criticize the Society, who have never read its Constitution. It is no use sending criticisms referring to matters which are outside the powers granted by the Constitution. If changes are wanted in administration, members should first find out what can or cannot be done. Of course, the Constitution itself can be changed, but till it is, we are bound by it as it is now.

I must now refer to a great problem which has come before Theosophists. It has been pointed out that one element of unrest in the Society is due to some members wanting the Society to change, because Mr. Krishnamurti is teaching. The Theosophical Society ought *always* to change, whether Mr. Krishnamurti is teaching or not. That, to me, is an axiom. We should always adapt the work of the Society to the needs of men, irrespective of whether any Teacher is or is not teaching in the world. But some of our critics say: "Ought not the Theosophical Society to accept the teaching of Krishnamurti, should it not stand behind him, should it not become the vessel into which he can pour his message?"

I should like to point out that the Society has never proclaimed any one teaching of any one Teacher as the sole truth. Both Colonel Olcott

and Madame Blavatsky declared themselves Buddhists in religion, but they nowhere said that the Buddha is the only Teacher. Dr. Besant has stressed the wonderful teachings of Hinduism, but she has never said that Shri Krishna is the only Teacher for all.

On the other hand, we have proclaimed that it is wise for every Theosophist to investigate every religion and every mystical tradition. If we were to say that the Society accepts and endorses the teaching of Krishnamurti, we should be doing what the Society was never intended to do. We stand neither for his teaching nor against it, just as we do not stand for the teaching of Shri Krishna nor for that of the Prophet Muhammad. But we are for any and every teaching which fosters Brotherhood. That, I hold, should be the attitude of the Theosophical Society. Since our First Object is to promote Brotherhood, the attitude of the Society as an organization should be to give encouragement to every teaching which is likely to promote Brotherhood.

Then some say: "Did not you leaders of the Society proclaim Krishnamurti as a Teacher to come; and now that he is come, ought not you definitely to enrol yourself under him and do his particular work?" *But the Theosophical Society has never proclaimed the coming of a World-Teacher.* But have not leading Theosophists? Yes, Dr. Besant, Bishop Leadbeater, Bishop Arundale, I

myself, we have all done so. But do not forget that meetings of the Order of the Star were always distinct from meetings of the Theosophical Society. From the beginning, when certain of us proclaimed how the young boy Krishnamurti was going to be the vehicle of a Great Teacher, and there was much alarm among some lest the Society should be committed to this strange idea, every meeting of the Order of the Star in the East has been held separately, and not under the auspices of the Theosophical Society.

It is perfectly true that during the days of a Convention, a particular day was given to the Order of the Star in the East. But that was for the convenience of the Society's members who were members of the Order of the Star, just as special times were given during Conventions to other groups of Theosophists interested in other types of work, like education, social service, art, and even politics. But wherever I have spoken to prepare men's minds to accept the World-Teacher, it has always been under the auspices of the Order of the Star in the East, and not as a part of my work for the Theosophical Society.

Any member who believes profoundly that he has something to give must be given an opportunity in the Society to express it. I do not think we can have more striking instances of the way that this opportunity has been taken than in the lives of the two Founders of the Society and of the present

President, Dr. Besant. When Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott came to Ceylon, they joined Buddhism. Did not the Theosophists then have the right to say : "You must not join that particular religion; you will commit the whole Society to Buddhism?" But I do not think that a single Hindu Theosophist misunderstood the acceptance of Buddhism by Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott, and said that they should not have become Buddhists.

But when Dr. Besant began her work in India in 1893, some members in Europe soon said—I was living there at the time—"Mrs. Besant is committing the whole Society to Hinduism." Then later, when Dr. Besant began a magnificent series of lectures in Queen's Hall on Esoteric Christianity, and for the first time gave an occult explanation of such a mystery as that of Transubstantiation, some Protestant members said: "Dr. Besant is committing us to Roman Catholicism!" Later when in 1911 she said of Krishnamurti: "This boy is going to be the vehicle of a Great Teacher," a certain number of members said: "Dr. Besant is committing the whole Society to this creed of the Star in the East!" When Dr. Besant later still became interested in the Liberal Catholic movement and attended its services, some said: "Dr. Besant is committing the Society to the Liberal Chatholic Church!" And this year when Dr. Besant went to the Star Camp

at Ommen, but did not go to Huizen, the headquarters of the Liberal Catholic Church in Holland, some Liberal Catholics said: "How is it that Dr. Besant goes only to the Star Camp, but does not come to us?"

One thing is perfectly clear; it is that Dr. Besant claims her liberty of action and exercises it. Dr. Besant has never said, "Follow me." Never has she once said in her life, "Come where I am going." She is not the person to look back to see how many behind her are ready to follow. She says, "I know what my duty is, and I am going to do it." But some have said: "Is not that a kind of forcing us? When Dr. Besant joined the Home Rule movement, when she worked against some policy of Gandhiji, was she not forcing us to follow her?" I reply, No! For such is the nature of us human beings that, let but another shine out with greater power of spiritual life, he is bound to influence us all. The moment the sun shines, all the little plants which are growing in the shade of a tree will be in the shadow; but that is not the fault of the tree.

The solution is for each of us to dare to claim to be a leader, work towards such a position, and not be a failure in it. We gain nothing by limiting beforehand the liberty of any leader. But we can oppose him if necessary, and depose him from his leadership. If we succeed, it means that our policy is what the Society wants.

I would say that our work as Theosophists must be to enquire into every teaching which helps Brotherhood. Just because that is our duty, I think we ought all to enquire into some of the most fascinating teachings which the world contains to-day, and they are the teachings of Krishnamurti. If his doctrine is rightly understood, it will profoundly help the cause of Brotherhood. But we cannot commit the Theosophical Society to his doctrine, any more than we can commit it to the doctrines of Hinduism or of Buddhism or of Christianity.

Speaking for myself, I mean to do as much as in me lies to explain to men the significance of Krishnamurti's teaching. But I mean equally to explain the significance of the teachings of Christ, Buddha, Shri Krishna, Muhammad, Zoroaster and other Teachers. Only the other day I wrote a few pages of foreword to a book on Muhammadanism, pointing out the beauties of Islam. In exactly the same way, so long as I am a member of the Theosophical Society and study the Ancient Wisdom, I shall do what I can to make people understand the significance of Krishnamurti's teaching.

About his teaching I can say this from my own experience: wherever I had to deliver two lectures during my Latin-American tour, to a public who knew nothing of Theosophy or of Krishnamurti, and I spoke first on Theosophy, explaining our general Theosophical attitude to life, and particularly the recognition which we have of the Divinity of all

men and things, and then delivered later the lecture on Krishnamurti's ideals, the public understood Krishnamurti far better, *because of the preparation given to their minds by my preliminary lecture on Theosophy*. That is my experience. Therefore I hold that the greatest service which I personally can render to Krishnamurti is to go on with my Theosophical work, expounding the great ideals of Theosophy, and so make the world realize that, since there is only one Divine Wisdom, the wisdom of Krishnamurti is also part of that Divine Wisdom.

There is one aspect of our work as Theosophists to which I must now refer. It is a work for the world which we have not yet begun, though it was mentioned to us as long ago as 1881 by that great Adept who is called the Mahāchohan. In certain remarks of his on the future of the Theosophical Society, which the Master K. H. passed on to Mr. A. P. Sinnett, the Mahāchohan explained first what the Society was not intended to be, and second what was its true rôle. It was not intended to be a school of magic, a place where occult teaching concerning secret powers in man was to be given to every person who wanted that knowledge, irrespective of whether by moral worth he deserved that knowledge or not. But the Society was definitely intended by its true Founders, the Adepts, to work in all ways to promote Brotherhood.

As an organization for practical Brotherhood, it had before it, as one part of its labours, work to

minimize the fearful struggle for existence which modern civilization was steadily intensifying. The lessening of the struggle for existence was to be brought about by the Theosophical Society, by showing the world, with the aid of Theosophy, the illusoriness of worldly ambitions. The great Adept desired us to teach the world "a practical contempt for the earthly life," since this was the only cure for the untold miseries of men. Let me quote his words :

In a word how—seeing that the main objects of the T.S. are misinterpreted by those who are most willing to serve us personally—are we to deal with the rest of mankind, with that curse known as the "struggle for life," which is the real and most prolific parent of most woes and sorrows and all crimes? Why has that struggle become the almost universal scheme of the universe? We answer, because no religion, with the exception of Buddhism, has hitherto taught a practical contempt for the earthly life, while each of them, always with that one solitary exception, has through its hells and damnations inculcated the greatest dread of death. Therefore do we find that struggle for life raging most fiercely in Christian countries, most prevalent in Europe and America. It weakens in the Pagan lands, and is nearly unknown among Buddhist populations. (In China during famine and where the masses are most ignorant of their own or any religion, it was remarked that those mothers who devoured their children belonged to localities where there were the most Christian missionaries to be found: where there were none, and the Bonzes alone had the field, the population died with the utmost indifference.) Teach the people to see that life on this earth, even the happiest, is but a burden and delusion, that it is but our own Karma, the cause producing the effect, that is our own judge, our saviour in future lives, and the great struggle for life will soon lose its intensity.

I do not think we have done much as yet towards this part of our work of helping to minimize the

struggle for existence. As Theosophists, we have not so hungered and thirsted after life in non-physical worlds as to show the world that "contempt for the earthly life" to which the Adept refers. We study much about "Devachan"—where we believe our aspirations will at last blossom in their beauty—but our realization of it all is so vague that we are little different from the rest of the world. Certainly we study the great scheme of the seven planes, but most Theosophists look at those planes *from below upwards*, and hence the vivid fact in their minds that this physical world is real, and all the invisible is not only invisible but also shadowy and unreal. It should be exactly the reverse with the true Theosophist.

The result is that though the Society has grown, we have not made individuals more spiritual. Our record in social service is great, but it would be greater still in effectiveness in helping men if we ourselves hungered and thirsted more for the life of the invisible worlds. It is indeed a noble ideal to plan to help the world, but "the world" which needs helping is not only the physical plane, but six other planes as well. And the "dead" are more than the living, when it comes to helping mankind! If more Theosophists were to live this aspect of Theosophy, I think we should be able, wherever we go, to establish a new set of values as to what constitutes happiness. When that is done, the struggle for existence will diminish, and men will not cling to

this earthly realm as they do now, and suffer so bitterly by their clinging.

So long as any kind of work remains to be done for Brotherhood, the Society has its rôle in the world. So long as here in India, there is one "untouchable," so long as Hinduism and Islam stand separate, so long as one simple ignorant Hindu or ignorant Muslim does not know how to reverence the other, the work of the Society is not over. And in foreign lands, so long as the white races do not change their attitude of superiority towards the coloured races, the work of the Society is not over. And in the United States, so long as its Negroes are held under any social subjection, the work for Brotherhood is not over.

Theosophists are wanted in every land with their work, and the work of the youngest Theosophist sometimes is as precious as the work of the President of the Society. So long as men are held under the sway of priests and of racial prejudices, so long work for Brotherhood is needed. There are for us all many ways of working. We have worked in the past, and our record is splendid. Each has his work, his part in the Great Plan.

In all my work, there is one aim, which is not to proclaim any particular ideas of Theosophy, but to strive in all ways to rouse in men's hearts and minds the recognition of a Hidden Divinity in man, whose Divine Nature is to be released by an understanding of the Wisdom. If Theosophy has given

me one message, it is that of the mystery of life, that exquisite overpowering sense of the Nature of God in all things, above all in all men. Therefore I have gone about, trying to teach people what are the truths of the past, what is Science and what its significance, and what is the beauty of Art and its message. And when speaking in Western lands, it has been to show what is the exquisite charm of the East and of its spirituality, that mysterious sense of spiritual presences everywhere which we find in India.

I have tried to do all this in the light of a Wisdom, not chaotically, but with the recognition that a Wisdom exists. I say that a Wisdom exists because, the more I study, the more I realize that the universe is not a chaotic group of forces and things, but that, on the other hand, there is behind all things and events a Divine Wisdom which "mightily and sweetly ordereth all things," a Divine Wisdom which shines in all—in Nature, in the movement of stars and planets, in every plant and animal. That same Wisdom is in the atom; and in an exquisite way, I find it especially in the faces of little children.

To make our Society the common meeting-ground of all who seek to offer service to God or to man is to me the task which lies before us all. So long as we succeed in teaching each who joins the Society to discover *his own Theosophy*, the future of the Society is utterly sure. We must teach

each to discover his own Theosophy by showing the way to his inmost Self; and we can show him that way by surrounding him with all that is noblest in the traditions of the past, and with all that is fascinating in the discoveries of the present.

The work of the Theosophical Society is, and must always be, to throw open all doors and gates which now shut us out from that Brotherland of the Spirit which is the heritage of all men.

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